SOME MOTIVES AND INCENTIVES To the Love of GOD,

Pathetically Discours'd of in a Letter to a Friend.

BY
The Honble *Robert Boyle.*

The Fifth Edition much Corrected.

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love, Heb. 10. 24.

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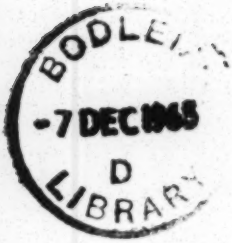

TO THE *COUNTESS* OF WARWICK.

My Dear Sister,

I *Expect You ſhould ſomewhat wonder, that after having for above Eleven years been careſull to keep this following Letter from the Publick View, and that too notwithſtanding the Sollicitation (not to ſay Importunity) of divers Illuſtrious Perſons, and even Your Commands, to Releaſe it from its Confinement; I ſhould now at length give way to its Paſſing Abroad into the World, and its making You a Publick and Solemn Addreſs. Wherefore judging my ſelf oblig'd to give You an account of a Paper, for which You have been long plea-*

ſed ſo Highly and ſo Obligingly to concern Your ſelf, I muſt, to remove Your Wonder, inform You, That I am Reduc'd to this Publication in my own Defence. For, whilſt I was far from dreaming of permitting this Epiſtle to paſſe out of my Cloſet, it happen'd, that a broken Copy of it did (by I know not what Misfortune for me) fall into the hands of a Neceſſitous perſon, who would needs perſuade himſelf, that by Printing it, he might relieve ſome of his preſent Wants; and thereupon proffer'd to ſell the Copy for a ſum of Money. But my good Fortune leading him to a Stationer, to whom my name was not unknown, he, very civilly, ſent me forthwith notice of the Propoſition that was made him, and after came himſelf to acquaint me, that the Copy, about which hee had been treated with, being but One of Two or Three that were then abroad, ſome or other of them would, queſtionleſſe, ſoon find the way to the Preſs. This unwelcome Accident did little leſſe Trouble than Surprize me; for, Beſides that it impos'd on me the neceſſity of a Publication I had ſo long declin'd; and beſides that I knew, that Compoſures of a very differing Nature being expected from me, the appearing of This, inſtead of Them, would

Some Treatiſes relating to Experimental Philoſophy.

would make this Unwelcom to many, though it had fewer Imperfections than it has: Beſides theſe things, (I ſay) my ſight was then, and is ſtill, ſo impair'd by a diſtemper in my Eyes; and the hours I could diſpoſe of were ſo præ-ingag'd to Philoſophical Themes, that I could not promiſe my ſelf ſo much as to Read it over before its going to the Printer. But conſidering after all this, that the Copy I had by mee was like to prove more Full, and leſſe Faulty, than any of thoſe that ſome endeavour'd to obtrude upon the World, I thought it leſſe Inconvenient to venture mine own abroad, than to run the hazard of a Surreptitious Edition of a Diſcourſe, that could ſo ill bear the appearing with any other Blemiſhes than thoſe it brought with it into the World from my Pen. And therefore, having put it into the hands of perſons, whoſe eminent Abilities, the more Knowing part of the Nation has long and juſtly admir'd, and begg'd their Impartial Opinion and Caſtigations of it, (giving them entire Liberty to Alter or Expunge whatever they diſlik'd;) and finding (by haſtily turning over the Leaves) that their Caſtigations were onely enough to let me ſee, that they had heedfully read it over; and

were accompanied with Encouragements, which care was taken to keep me from looking upon as meer Complements: I let it go to the Preſs, without ſo much as having once perus'd it, or heard it read over, ſince the Stationer firſt gave me the Advertiſement I told you of. Which I made the leſſe ſcruple to do, becauſe a Critick, whoſe Judgement and Piety I much reverence, ſeriouſly endeavoured to perſuade me, that I ought not in Conſcience to decline publiſhing, what hee was pleaſed to think proper to Kindle or Cheriſh the Flames of Divine Love in the Breaſts of the Readers. And my Haſte it ſelf did afterwards promiſe me theſe advantages, that notwithſtanding my Books not coming forth ſooner, I ſhould not loſe the Excuſe of Youth *I had when it was Written: nay, and that the Faulty paſſages which may be met with in it, will perhaps be charged upon thoſe that ſuffer'd them to paſſe Uncorrected, when they had ſo abſolute a power to Expunge or Reform them. Theſe, and the like Motives, having induc'd me to conſent to the Publication of the following Letter, I needed not deliberate long, to whom I ſhould addreſſe it. For, ſince that Accompliſh'd* Lindamor, *whom it ſo much Concerned,*

has

has left the World, there is no perſon in it to whom this Addreſſe is any thing near ſo due, as unto You, dear Siſter. It was at that Delicious Leeze, *where You are now the Miſtreſſe, that this Letter was written; and it was of You that I borrow'd thoſe hours I ſpent in writing it. 'Twas to You that I ſhew'd it almoſt Sheet by Sheet, before I reſolv'd to ſend it away. 'Tis You that can beſt Excuſe the Imperfections of it, as knowing not only the more Obvious, but the more Private Avocations and other Diſadvantages, among which it was penn'd. 'Tis You that have ever ſince Sollicited me to divulge it, and have given me the greateſt Encouragements to do ſo, not only by thoſe Sollicitations which imply'd Your Own favourable Opinion of it, but by procuring me (by Concealing or Diſguiſing my name) the unſuſpected Opinions of divers competent Judges. In a word, this Addreſſe belongs upon ſo many Scores to You, that I could not make it any where elſe, without manifeſtly Wronging You. I know, Dear Siſter, that it is not uſual to Dedicate Books to ſo near a Relation; and that it is uſual in Dedicatory Epiſtles, both to Depricate what one hath Written, and to Extol the Perſon that one Writes to, eſpecially if it bee one of Your*

Sex

Sex and Quality. But You know too, that I never swore Allegiance to Custom, and therefore will not, I suppose, wonder to see me as little Sollicitous to conform to it on This occasion as on Others. In an Age, when so few Persons have Merit enough, to keep that from being Flattery, which should be but Praise, I am not at all Ambitious of casting my self upon the unhappy Necessity, of either Flattering, or appearing Rude; when by better choosing the Objects of my Addresses, I can, as Occasion requires, give Praises without Untruth, or forbear them without Incivility. Nor dare I presume, that a Lye ceases to be a Fault, by being put into a Dedicatory Epistle; as Antiently the Hurtfull Beasts forgot their Pernicious Nature, when brought into the Ark. Not to mention, that Books of Devotion have generally the strange and unhappy Fate, of being Less Welcome to them that Most, than to them that Less need them. As for the Discourse I present You, though My opinion of it may be ghess'd at, by the Privacy to which I have so long Confin'd it: Yet because, as in Physick, to have a good Opinion of the Medicine, and the Doctor: so in Books of Devotion, (which are a kind of Physick for the Mind) to have one of the Compo-

sure, or of the Writer; both inclines us to look after the Prescriptions, and Advantages their Operations; For this reason I shall say nothing to Disparage a Discourse, which is of a Nature to aim more at the being Practised by the Readers, than the being Pardon'd; and shall not at all repine to see it find from the Publick a Favourable a Reception, as it has hitherto met with in Closets. And now, Dear Sister, though I know You will not; yet I doubt, my other Readers will expect, that this Letter should, according to the Mode of Epistles Dedicatory, be Concluded with Commendations of You, and Complements to You. It being almost as much out of fashion in such Addresses to Omit giving praises, as 'tis to Believe the praises given on such Occasion. But, though I can Praise You without either Disbelieving my self, or Fearing to be disbelieved by any that knows You; yet, besides that our Relation, and our Friendship, would make such a Way of writing misbecoming me on All occasions; I know your Piety and Your Modesty, would peculiarly disallow it upon this; where the Subject I am to entertain You with is of such a Nature, as would make a Flaunting Address, but a very Unsuitable Introduction to it. The Nature of my Theme, as well

as

as the Strictneſs of your Virtue, and Our Friendſhip, forbidding me here to celebrate You, otherwiſe than by letting the World ſee, that I dare, even in a Dedicatory Addreſs, without fear of diſpleaſing You, forbear to Celebrate You. And if it be demanded, Why then I refrain not likewiſe from writing to You a Dedication? I ſhall Anſwer, That I am unwilling to loſe this Opportunity of making a Publick Acknowledgment, that as I have the Honour to be Your Brother, and Your Friend, ſo I have the Juſtice to think it very much my Happineſſe to be ſo: Eſpecially, ſince You are pleaſed to aſſure me, That my Relation to You has rather been the Occaſion than the Ground of a Friendſhip, that does, whilſt it enjoyns me to Profeſs my ſelf without Complement, Oblige me to be, with all the Sincerity that's Poſſible,

My Dear Sister,

Your moſt affectionate Brother, and moſt faithfull humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertiſements to the
READER.

(As they were written ſome Years ſince, when ſome intelligent perſons were to have a ſight of the following Diſcourſe.)

TO prevent thoſe Scruples which might ariſe in the peruſal of the enſuing Diſcourſe, the Reader of it is requeſted to take notice.

I. That though Ignorance hath been of late ſo much in faſhion with too many of our young Nobility, that ſome paſſages of the enſuing Papers may ſeem unfit to have been written to a young Gentleman, yet the Perſon they were addreſs'd to, being both a Traveller, a Linguiſt, and a Scholar, it was not improper to diſcourſe with him at the rate of ſuppoſing him ſo qualifi'd.

I I. That the enſuing Letter was not written ſingle, being but the laſt of Divers; *wherein* Love in general was confeſſed, juſtifi'd, and celebrated; *wherein* the received way of making Love was explicated, defended, and oppoſed; *wherein*

wherein Conſtancy and Inconſtancy in Love were argued for and againſt; *wherein* Platonick Love was explicated, celebrated, and derided; *wherein* the cure of Love was propoſed and proſecuted; *wherein* (to diſpatch) the contraverted Points concerning love were diſcours'd of, in a way ſuited to the ſeveral Themes; and to the humours and principles of the ſuppoſed Writers. But all the Former Papers, (written in Complement to a fair Lady) though very free from the guilt of either Licentiouſneſſe or Prophaneneſſe, have been by the Author judged too little ſerious, either to appear alone, or to accompany the enſuing Diſcourſe, wherein he has expreſſed his own Opinions, as in the former he but deduced thoſe of imaginary Perſons.

III. That the following Paper was to have been attended by another, wherein the Properties & Duties of *Seraphick Love* were to have been explicated and inſiſted on, but the Author, before he had written that Other, accidentally meeting with a French Book, wherein, though what he had already Diſcourſed of were not handled, he found that much of what he had deſigned

L' Amour Divin de Mr. du Moulin.

deſigned to ſet down was Anticipated; and the moſt pertinent Conſiderations his intended Themes ſuggeſted, were skilfully diſplayed already: he fear'd it might be injurious to his Reader, and himſelf, if he ſhould either turn a Tranſcriber of others Notions, or decline the beſt thoughts belonging to his Theme, that the leſſe good Ones might paſſe without ſuſpicion for his Own.

IV. That the enſuing Trifle having been written in haſte, and by ſnatches, amongſt diſtracting Avocations, and far from literary Accommodations, is freely ſubmitted to the Cenſure of learned and impartial Peruſers, eſpecially Divines: who are by the Author requeſted to believe its miſtaking Paſſages, and unwary Expreſſions, (if it contain any ſuch) to have been altogether *Unintentional*, and ſuch as they ſhall never find it to be more than one Labour to make him diſcern and retract; he being reſolved, by Gods aſſiſtance, to continue ſtill Obſequious enough to all clearer Diſcoveries of Truth, to be able to ſay, *Errare Poſſum, Hæreticus eſſe Nollo.* And as he is on his part ſo reſigned, and ſo willing to be rectified, ſo he expects this equity from

thoſe,

thoſe, to whoſe judgements he ſubmits, That, conſidering he intended not to write a ſolemn and regular Treatiſe, but a private and familiar Epiſtle, they will paſſe by ſuch Unaccurateneſſes as are wont to be incident to Compoſures of this later Nature. He preſum'd he might ſometimes make bold with the vulgar Lawes of *Tenſes*, treating of an Eternity that admits them not. He hop'd, that the freedom taken in ſome of his expreſſions concerning Love, and the wonted Objects of it, would be excus'd, by its being exacted by the deſign he had upon *Lindamor*, though he had not (which yet he has) otherwiſe accounted for it. He intends not to adopt thoſe (too often erroneous) Traditions of the Vulgar whence he ſometimes drawes compariſons, that he may not deny himſelf the liberty taken by the Generality of Writers, (without excepting the Learneder ſort of them) who ſcruple not in Popular Compoſures to make Similies and Alluſions grounded on Popular Traditions and Perſwaſions. As for thoſe common places, which the method of our Authors Diſcourſe allow'd him not to Decline, he hopes the Reader will

In a Dedication of all the fore-mention'd letters to my Lady, T. J.

will diſcern by his way of Writing, that he loves to uſe them not as Travellers, but as Hunters uſe the Highwayes: For the Traveller, when he once gets into the Road, makes it his buſineſſe to keep in it; whereas the Hunter, if he meets one lying in his way, is not fond of ſtaying in it, but nimbly croſſes it, or Traverſes ſo much of it, as is requiſite to be paſt through in the perſute of his Game. And laſtly, if in ſome few Paſſages of the following Letter (eſpecially about the beginning of it) the Expreſſions are leſſe grave and ſolemn than the Deſign; the Author hopes, that even they will yet appear tolerably ſerious, for the Aerieſt parts of a Letter, written by one young Gentleman to another.

SOME

SOME MOTIVES To the Love of GOD.

My Deareſt Lindamor.

I Am very much delighted to learn, both by the Voice of Fame, and the Information of much more credible Relators, that *Hermione's* cold Uſage has cur'd you of the Fever her ſcorching eyes had given you: And that when once you found your ſelf reſerved to ſhew, what wonders her Eyes were able to perform, you ſeaſonably reſolv'd to become an Inſtance of the power, rather of Reaſon, than of Love; and accordingly, did your ſelf the right to fruſtrate the

vain hopes, your Inſulting Miſtreſs cheriſh'd to manifeſt in you, That her Charms were capable to make your Flame perſevere, when her Change had made it as well cauſleſs as hopeleſs. I could wiſh indeed for your ſake, that you owed your Cure more entirely to your Reaſon, and leſſe to your Reſentment; That the Extraction of your Freedom may no wayes blemiſh it. But ſince unallay'd Satisfactions are joyes too Heavenly, to fall to many mens ſhares on Earth, I cannot but conclude, that your Recovery, even on theſe Tearms, deſerves I ſhould Congratulate it. For, the *French* ſay truly, that *Les plus courtes Folies ſont les meilleures.* And Liberty being too high a Bleſſing to be diveſtible of that nature by Circumſtances; I (that ſeldom deplore him, who by loſing his Miſtreſs recovers Himſelf) think that *Hermione* has but intentionally, not eventually diſoblig'd you; and hath made your flames a better return, by reſtoring you your own Heart, than ſhe could have done by exchanging hers for it. But that which not leaſt endears to me your Recovery, is, That I am aſſur'd by Perſons, from whom I dare Credit even ſo welcome News, that my endeavours

deavours prov'd ſo happy as to be conducive to it, and that the Conſiderations I ventur'd to preſent you, did at leaſt ſo far contribute to your Freedom, as to give you the deſire and the deſign of regaining it. For, I hope, I need not tell you, that I ſeldom uſe Endeavours, whoſe Proſperouſneſſe is more welcome to me, than thoſe, that aſpire to ſerve *Lindamor*. And though I cannot ever pay you any Great Services in relation to my vaſtly Greater deſires, yet I can ſcarce do you Little ones in relation to the Delight reſulting from the having done you any. Nor has the Joy which this ſucceſs of my Diſcourſes brings me, being ſparingly encreas'd by my having ventur'd them with much more *Deſire*, than Expectation, of their Proſpering; and leſſe out of any ſtrong hope they would ſucceed, than out of an unwillingneſſe to leave the means, I thought leaſt improbable, unaſſay'd: being invited to excite you to greater hopes, than I durſt allow my ſelf for you; by the Example of Generals, who, whatſoever diſtruſtful thoughts they harbour in their breaſts, ſuppoſe, that (before the Battel) to make their Souldiers fight ſucceſsfully, 'tis as well conducive as requi-

ſite, by encouraging Orations, to make them think they ſhall do ſo. For, although I endeavour'd indeed to perſuade you, that Reaſon being born Soveraign of the Paſſions, though her Lenity or Supineneſs do ſometimes both occaſion and permit their Uſurpations; She is ſeldome ſo diveſted of her Native Power, but that whenſoever ſhe pleaſeth to imploy what ſhe hath left, ſhe is able to reſume what ſhe hath loſt: And though I was willing you ſhould believe, that to perfect what your Reſentment had begun, was a Task ſo eaſie, that the Victory was as much in your power, as the Reſolution of attempting it; Yet, notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, I was once half perſuaded, that to undertake the Curing of a Lover was the next Weakneſſe to the being one. And, *Lindamor*, to deal ingeniouſly with you, your Recovery hath circumſtances in it, that make me very apprehenſive, that you are not yet out of the danger of a Relapſe, and that you have not halfſo abſolutely abandon'd your former Amorous Conſtitution of mind, as the former Idol of it. I know that from a perſon, who, for one that hath never yet been hurt by *Cupid*, is accuſed of uſing him ſlightingly and ſevere-

ſeverely enough, you will expect Endeavours to preſerve you from Relapſes, by ſuch diſſuaſions from Love, as its Votaries will ſcarce vouchſafe ſo mild a Title to, as that of Invectives againſt it. And I ſhall Ingenuouſly acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that I have been ſometimes no very unready Satyriſt on that Theme; and with a Pen, reliſhing of the Liberty I cheriſh'd in my heart, endeavour'd to diſabuſe thoſe ſervile Souls, that being born to Reaſon, ſo far degraded themſelves, as to boaſt ſolely an exceſſe of Paſſion; and had ſuch low and narrow Thoughts of Felicity and Miſery, as to expect either from a Womans uſage. All which I thought I might the freelier do, becauſe having never known the infelicities of Love, but in the ſufferings of others, I might probably ſuppoſe, that my Declamations againſt it would paſſe for the productions of my Reaſon, not my Revenge. But, *Lindamor*, though the extravagancies of ſome Mens folly, have been ſometimes too great, to let me avoid laughing ſomewhat Satyrically at it; yet I am really too little an enemy to Love, unleſſe exceſſive or miſplac'd, by indiſtinct and diſfiguring Conſiderations, to repreſent to you the

Nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind, as it is moſt hideous and Formidable Diſeaſe.

Sect. 1. To Love, even with ſome Paſſionateneſſe, the Perſon you would Marry, is not only allowable but Expedient, being almoſt neceſſary to the Duty of fixing your Affection, where you have once engaged your Faith; For, it hath been obſerv'd, that Love doth ſeldom ſuffer it ſelf to be confin'd by other Matches than thoſe of its own making. And few, but they, that are ſo wiſe as they ſee cauſe to be almoſt in Love before hand with thoſe they Marry, prove ſo honeſt as afterwards to be in Love with none elſe. Since therefore, the marriage of a Wiſe man ſuppoſes at leaſt as high a degree of Love, as he is capable to cheriſh without forfeiting that Title; I can ſcarce diſallow the being moderatly in Love without being injurious to Marriage, which is a Relation, that though *I* can with much leſs reluctancy Permit others, than Contract my ſelf; yet dare I not abſolutely condemn a condition of Life, as expedient to no Man, without which, even Paradiſe and Innocence were not ſufficient to compleat the Happineſs of the firſt Man. Thus you ſee, *Lindamor*, that I do not promiſcuouſly quarrel with all

all ſorts of Love, but endeavour only to poſſeſſe you with this Truth, That as antiently, among the Jewes, there were odoriferous Unguents, which it was neither unuſual nor unlaful to anoint themſelves with, or beſtow upon their Friends; but there was a certain peculiar Compoſition too, of a pretious Ointment, which GOD having reſerv'd to be imploy'd in his own Service; with that, the Perfuming of their Friends was Criminal and Sacrilegious: So there are regulated degrees of Love, which 'tis not forbidden to harbor, for a Friend, a Miſtriſs, or a Wife; but there is too a certain peculiar ſtrain, or (if I may ſo call it) Herorick Temperament of Love, which, where ever it is found, makes it belong, as unalienable, as juſtly, unto GOD. A virtuous Wife may love both her Husbands Relations and her own, and yet be truly ſaid to Love him with her whole heart; becauſe there is a certain unrivall'd degree of Kindneſſe, and a peculiar ſort of Love which conſtitutes true conjugal Affection, that ſhe confines to him, and reſerves intirely for him, and would think it Criminal to harbor for any other perſon: So a Religious Soul may obey the Command, of loving

God entirely, though ſhe allow her Affections other Objects; provided, they be kept in a due Subordination to, and kept from entring into Competition with that Love, which ought to be appropriated to Him; and which reſults chiefly from, an either altogether, or almoſt, unincreaſable Elevation, and vaſtneſſe of Affection; from an intire Reſignment to, and an abſolute dependence on, the Lov'd Party; from a reſtleſſe Diſquiet upon the leaſt ſenſe or doubt of Her Diſpleaſure; from a greater Concern in Her Intereſts, than ones own; from an expectation no leſs than Felicity or Wretchedneſſe from her Friendſhip or Indignation; or at leaſt a perſuadedneſs that nothing can be a greater Happineſs than Her Favour, or deſerve the name of Happineſs without it. For, where ever a Paſſion has theſe Properties, or any of them, conſpicuous in it; it cannot, but by being conſecrated to God, avoid becoming injurious both to Him and it ſelf. The very Nobleneſſe of it entitles Him to it: As in ſome Kingdoms, (and particularly here in *England*) though Veins of courſer Metals may belong to the Owner of the Soil they grow in, yet all the Mines of the more perfect Metals

tals (as Gold and Silver) are by the Law made Mines Royal, and belong to the King, to whom their value appropriates them. By reflecting upon this peculiar Notion of Love, you may be pleas'd, *Lindamor*, to interpret ſuch indefinite Expreſſions as you may meet with in the following Diſcourſe. And this Love, I have taken the freedom to ſtyle *Seraphick Love*, (not out of any affectation of Tumid Words or Titles, but) borrowing the name from (if the Romiſh Divines be good Marſhals of the Heavenly Hoſt) thoſe nobler Spirits of the Cœleſtial Hierarchie, whoſe Name in the Language to which it belongs, expreſſes them to be of a Flaming nature; and whoſe imployment (mentioned in the * Evangelical Prophet's Myſterious Viſion) ſufficiently points at the divine Object, to which the flames, that warm them, aſpire and tend. And me thinks, *Lindamor*, that you ſhould find it no faint Invitation to embrace *Seraphick Love*, that you may have the Advantage, by making your ſelf a Rival to theſe glorious Spirits.

The Name Seraphim, *in the* Hebrew, *ſprings from the Root* Saraph, *which ſignifies to burn or flame: Whence*, Numb. 21. 6. *thoſe pernicious creatures, that our Tranſlators Engliſh*, Fiery Serpents, *are ſtiled in the Original*, Hanacchaſim haſ-ſeraphim.

* *Iſa.* 6. 2. 3.

rits, to make them your Friends, and the honour to be ingaged in a Service, where you are ſure of ſuch Illuſtrious Concurrents. At leaſt if you be of the mind of that generous Youth, (to whoſe ſucceſsful Valour the couquer'd World was both Theatre and Trophie) who refus'd to run at the Olympick Games, becauſe there were no Monarchs to run with him. But I fear, *Lindamor*, I have a little digreſs'd; ſince I might have told you in fewer words, that it is not my deſign in this Paper to declame againſt Love in general, or make a ſolemn Harangue of the Fickleneſs of Women; and that therefore, as when young Gallants (ſuch as you, *Lindamor*) are ſubject to caſt away their Love upon unfit Objects, their diſcreet Friends, (ſenſible of the truth of the Italian Comick's Obſervation, that

Oneſtâ contra' amore
E troppo frale ſchermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthfull Hearts bare Vertues
wont to prove
But a weak ſhield againſt the
darts of Love.)

without

without taking any more than neceſſary notice of their former fond and ſtragling Paſſions, reclaim them by either matching them, or at leaſt (in order thereunto) engaging their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty or Prerogatives may both legitimate and confine their affections: So I ſhall now endeavour to prevent the future Gaddings of your Love to Objects, that cannot deſerve ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſt a one, as I have obſerv'd yours to have been; by preferring and engaging it to the True Object that Paſſion was born to, the Nobleſt it can aſpire to, and the moſt Satisfying it can enjoy. Yes, *Lindamor*, as it has hitherto been my not-unproſperous Task to Un-hood your Soul, I ſhall now make it my buſineſs to ſhew her Game to fly at. I ſee that Love in *Lindamor* is too Noble and Predominant an Affection, to be either Eaſie or Fit to be deſtroy'd. It will therefore be my deſign, not to Suppreſs your flame, but to Addreſs it. I wiſh'd it withdrawn from *Hermione*, not to Annihilate it, but to Transfigure it. I would not have a Paſſion which wanted nothing, but a due Object, to be Seraphick Love; like Vulgar men, be ſwallow'd up by Death, the common fate:

fate: But be ennobled by a deſtiny like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who, having ceas'd to converſe with Mortals, Dy'd not, but were Tranſlated into Heaven.

Sect. 2. What has been ſaid already, *Lindamor*, hath, it ſeems, ſuffic'd to rectifie your Love; by Diſabuſing it, and ſhewing you, how unfitly it was plac'd on its former Objects. Your proficiency in That, invites me to proceed with you to a new Leſſon, and (mindfull of that true Saying of an Eminent Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult eſſe meliorem*) to endeavour to exalt your paſſion by Directing and Setling it upon an Object, the due Contemplation of whoſe Lovelineſs may cure as perfectly all hurts received from any Mortal Beauty, as anciently the Sight of the Myſterious Serpent on the Pole did cure the hurts the fiery Serpents gave. For, ſince to gaze ſtedfaſtly on an outward Beauty, where all your looking will but diſcover the ſame face, is found ſo effectual to Kindle or to Blow the fire of Love, (which the Greeks prettily enough expreſſe by their ἐκ τῦ ὁρᾶν γίνεται τὸ ἐρᾶν) how much muſt a due Contemplation enamour us of that Divine, and, though Refulgent, yet ever more and more Diſcoverable

Numb. 21. v. 8, 9.

coverable Object, where Attention and Wonder ſtill mutually excite and cheriſh each other? Whence the zealouſeſt and perfecteſt Lovers of God are the glorious Angels, of whom our Saviour ſayes, that in Heaven *they alwayes behold the face of his Father which is in Heaven*; and thoſe bleſſed Saints, whoſe imployment, and whoſe happineſs is, in the *Revelation*, expreſt to be, *To follow the Lamb whitherſoever hee goes*. And thoſe unblemiſh'd Perſons are in that place recorded to have kept themſelves Undefiled by mortal Beauties; to teach us, that the nearer and clearer Intuition, that Heaven affords them of the glorious Object of their Paſſion, was, not the Cauſe of it, but the Recompence; and that whilſt they liv'd Exiles here on Earth, 'twas ſuch a ſpeculation, as I am recommending (*Lindamor*) to You, wherewith they liv'd (to borrow the Expreſſion uſed of *Moſes*) *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; a Sight, whoſe Glory made them look on fading Beauties, with as undazl'd and untroubl'd Eyes, as Eagles can be ſuppos'd to caſt on Gloworms when they have been newly gazing on the Sun.

Mat. 18. 20.

Rev. 14. 4.

Heb. 11. 27.

To engage your Love, *Lindamor*, to *Sect.* 3.

this

this ſublimeſt of Objects, I ſhall deſire, that all that I have ſaid to divert your former Flames, and all that I may ſay to depriciate and diſcredit thoſe degrading and diſquieting Amours, that are wont to inveagle Mortals, may be look'd upon as meant, rather by way of Preparative, than of Motive, aiming but to Diſabuſe and Rectifie your mind, that with Compos'd and Unprepoſſeſs'd thoughts you may judge of the Object I propoſe to you. Which to qualifie you to be but impartial to, this Method ſeem'd expedient; being but imploy'd upon ſuch a Score, as that on which the Platoniſts us'd to premiſe certain Virtues, which they (ſignificantly enough) call'd Purgative, to diſpoſe and fit the Mind for the Reception of ſublimer truths. As Phyſicians to clear the Sight are wont to purge the Head, that the Eye freed from all darkning and diſguiſing Tinctures, may the more perfectly diſcern the Objects preſented to it. And certainly, the Love I would perſuade, is of a nature, that makes nothing more conducive to it, than the greateſt Uncloudedneſs of the Eye, and the perfecteſt Illuſtration of the Object: which is ſuch, that the cleareſt Reaſon is the moſt advantageous

Light

Light it can deſire to be ſeen by. You know the Story of that witty Wench, who us'd merrily to wiſh her Lover all good Qualities, but a good Underſtanding; for That, ſaid ſhe, would make them out of Love with me. The Divine Object to which I would Prefer you, *Lindamor*, is ſo far from being obnoxious to a Danger of that Nature, that I need not Diſparage any other to Enamour you of this. For, the Creator is too full of Excellencies to need to be recommended or ſet off by the Creature's Defects. He was ſoverainly Lovely in Himſelf, before they had a Being; nor has his giving us that Paſſion, call'd Love, made him the unfitter Object for it. To love God, but becauſe your Miſtriſs has perſonall faults, is a greater, than any of thoſe for which you have declin'd her; and is ſuch a Solœciſm in Seraphick Love, as it were in the Perſian Religion, (for that has yet embracers in the Eaſt, as thoſe, that have there convers'd with them, aſſure me) to make the Spots that blemiſh the Moon the Motives of their worſhipping the Sun. *Hermione* is a Lady, to whoſe noble Relations I am too much a Servant, not to have a Reſpect for Her; and I cannot, without

without concluding her an Extraordinary perſon, remember how lately ſhe enjoy'd the honour of Captivating *Lindamor*; and though ſhe has ſince by injuriouſly Declining, juſtly Forfeited the glorious Title of his Miſtriſs; yet the Qualities, that gave it her, made me, among divers others, like her ſo well, that 'tis now my Quarrel to her, that ſhe Is not what ſhe Was. And therefore, what ever may fall from my Pen to her diſadvantage, relates to Her but as ſhe was, or may again be, an Obſtacle to your devotedneſs to Seraphick Love. To ingage you to which, (all this notwithſtanding, *Lindamor*) I muſt do you the right to tell you, that God deſerves the higheſt Elevation of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were ſhe not only as Handſome as you fancyd her, but as Conſtant as you wiſh'd her, her Beauty, and her Friendſhip too concurring, could not have made her other than, as Diſadvantagious as Injurious, a Rival unto God; and, in the very Fruition of as obliging Returns as her Kindneſs could have made your Paſſion, ſhe would have deſerv'd but a more moderate Degree of it. Angels, to whom Women were never falſe or cruel,

el, love their Maker above all things, and he to whom St *John* presents his Adoration, refused it for himself to direct it unto God. Would not your self, *Lindamor*, have thought your *Hermione* absolutely Handsome, though Moors had not worn the Devil's Livery; and the thing call'd Deformity, had been as much a stranger, as it is unwelcome to her Sex? 'Tis true, such is our frailty, that, As the *Israelites* needed a cruel and oppressive Bondage in *Ægypt*, to make them resolve on returning to the Blessed Land of *Canaan*; so oftentimes, the amorous Soul needs the harsh Usage of a disdainfull Mistress, to disgust it with its Thraldom, and make it aspire to its more genuine and satisfying Object. I may therefore allow *Hermione*'s Defects to have given you Freedom and Occasion to consider the Prerogatives of *Seraphick Love*: but I must not allow them to be the chief Motives of your embracing it. For, it were too injurious to its glorious Object, to make that but the Refuge of a Defeated Passion, whose Transcendency entitles it to more than the most Elevated and Entire one. Alas, God needs not these beggerly Parallels with any fading Objects, to become that of our disabus'd Devotion, and He were Lovely without comparison, as well as He is so Above it. And though I be not so unjust to deny, Rev. 22. 4. & 19. 1.

that there are Ladies (ſome of which I have the happineſs not to be unknown to my ſelf) whoſe Excellencies are capable to ennoble their whole Sex: Yet their greateſt accompliſhments compar'd to His Perfections, whoſe gifts they are, are in that Eclipſing company, as inconſpicuous as the faint Qualities of more Ordinary perſons. As when in a clear Morning, the Riſing-Sun vouchſafes to viſit us, as well thoſe Bright Stars that did Adorn our Hemiſphere, as thoſe Dark ſhades that did Benight it, vaniſh Conſonantly whereunto, give me leave to obſerve to you, *Lindamor*, that though divers of God's Attributes are through his Goodneſs participated by his Creatures, yet the Scripture makes ſo vaſt a diſparity betwixt the Excellencies that it aſcribes to Men, and the ſame Perfections conſider'd as they exiſt in God, that it ſeems abſolutely to exclude Created Beings from any Title to thoſe Attributes; becauſe they poſſeſs them but in a way ſo Inferior to that tranſcendent, peculiar, and Divine manner, in which they belong to God. Thus our Saviour ſays to him that (taking him but for a Man) call'd him good, *Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but One,* (that is) *God.* Thus St. *Paul* calls God (or Chriſt) the only Potentate, μόνος δυνάστης, though the Earth be ſhared by ſeveral

Mat. 19. 16. 19.

2 Tim. 6. 15.

ſeveral Potentates; and even the devout *Eunuch* in the *Acts*, and the depoſed Grandees mentioned by the Bleſſed Virgin in her Canticle, are, in the Original, ſtyled Potentates. Thus, though there be Wiſe Virgins as well as Fooliſh; and though our Saviour tells us, That *the Children of this World are in their generations wiſer than the Children of Light*: Yet St. *Paul* ſcruples not to tearm his Maker, *The only Wiſe God*; and thus he elſe-where Paraphraſes him, *He that only hath immortality*, though Angels and humane Souls be Deathleſs. In ſo Incommunicable a manner does the Superiority of God's Nature make him poſſeſs thoſe very Excellencies, which the diffuſiveneſs of his Goodneſs makes him pleaſed to Communicate. I am the more zealous, *Lindamor*, to transfigure your Love into Devotion, (which I muſt deſire you to look upon but as a vary'd name for *Seraphick Love*) becauſe I have obſerv'd your Paſſion to have been extreamly impatient of Confinement, and to have eſteem'd what ever may be tearm'd Limits to be Priſons. Few therefore can Need more, or Deſerve better, an object for their Love, for which too immenſe a vaſtneſs were impoſſible. And ſuch a one is God, whoſe Soveraign Perfections render him ſo uncapable of being lov'd Too Much, that the moſt aſpiring Act. 8.17 Luk.1.52 Mat. 25. 5. Luk.16.8 1 Tim.1. 17. 1 Tim.6. 18.

Paſſion can ſcarce arrive (ſo much, as) to Leſſen its Diſproportion to the Object. Other Paſſions, like other Rivers, are moſt lik'd, when they calmly flow within their wonted Banks: But of *Seraphick Love*, as of *Nilus*, the very Inundations might be deſirable, and his Over-flowing make him the more welcome. For mortal Beauties, our paſſions are like our ſelves: If our Stature chance to exceed a certain ſize or Standart, it makes us Monſtrous; but Devotion is like a flawleſs Diamond, where the Bigneſs taxes the Value, and the unuſual Bulk both rates and inhances the Luſtre and the Price. To give GOD All our Love is the greateſt Command both of the Law and Goſpel (in its capacious and teeming Womb, both Compriſing and Cheriſhing all the other Services God requires) and that there is not more exacted of us, is not, that an Addition were Culpable, but becauſe it is Impoſſible. So noble is the nature of Devotion, that it admits of failings but by one of the Extremes, which is that of Defect. For, Mediocrity, (whoſe Office 'tis to reſtrain us from approaching the utmoſt Limits) which in other Paſſions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. Or, at leaſt, if Mediocrity be that which creates Paſſions Virtues, the Mediocrity of this Love muſt conſiſt in the Boundleſneſs of it,

ſince

ſince that is it which makes it moſt a Virtue. The man after God's own heart is not afear'd to own even to his Maker an ardency of Love for Him, which muſt be expreſt by the ſignificant Metaphor of Thirſt; and that ſuch a Thirſt too, as makes the panting Hart (by Naturaliſts obſerved to be a very Dry Creature) *bray* (as I remember the Hebrew hath it) for thoſe refreſhing ſtreams, whoſe want diſtreſſes and reduces her to an almoſt gaſping condition: *My* very *Soul* (ſaith he) *thirſteth for God.* And we know, that Thirſt is not only ſo violent an appetite, that it leſſens the Wonder of that Monarch's Bargain, whom Hiſtory records to have parted with his Kingdom for a Cup of water: But thirſt doth ſo confine our Longings to what It craves, that nothing elſe can ſatisfie them. The wealth of both the *Indies* would not excuſe the want of a needed Cup, ſuppoſing their Poſſeſſor tormented with an Appetite, which cannot be quench'd but by Drink. To which I muſt add, that the uneaſineſs of unreliev'd thirſt, is not, like that of other inconveniences, leſſen'd by Continuance, but grows by Laſting the more Unſupportable. The ſame inſpir'd Poet ſcruples not alſo to profeſs ſo ſenſible and ſo active a Concern for God's Intereſts, that the *zeal of God's Houſe had eaten him up*; and hugely troubled he is,

Pſal. 42. 1. *Cervina caro ſicca eſt, &c.* Sennert. *Inſti. De Alimentor facultatibus.* lib 4. part 1. cap. 3. verſ. 2.

that others are not affected with the ſame Zeal. *I beheld* (ſays he) *the Tranſgreſſors, and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word.* Nay, *Rivers of waters*, ſays he, *run down mine Eyes, becauſe they kept not thy Law*; and to manifeſt how much the tenderneſs & unc'erv'dneſs of his Love, made him think thoſe his friends or enemies, that were ſo to God, *Mine eyes* (ſays he) *ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with me: He that walketh perfect in the way, he ſhall ſerve me. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee? and am not I grieved with thoſe, that riſe up againſt Thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies.* At this Rate did pious *David* love his Maker; but he was ſo far from thinking this Rate Exceſſive, that, tranſported by the ſenſe of his Perſonal Diſability to pay that Divine Object all the Love that his Perfections merited; he is not content to rouſe up all his own faculties to praiſe God, (*Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his holy Name*) but he invites all the Godly to aſſiſt him in the Payment of ſo vaſt a Debt. (*Love the Lord all ye Saints, for, &c.*) And again, (*Praiſe the Lord, all ye Nations, praiſe him all ye People.*) And not content neither frequently to do this, as may appear by very many paſſages of his

Pſal. 119. 158.
Ibidem v. 136.
Pſal. 101. 6.
Pſal. 139. 21, 22.
Pſal. 103. 1.
Pſalm 117. 1.
Pſal. 138. 3.

his ſacred Poems, he extends his Invitation to the Angels, and all the other Hoſts of God, and concludes the Book of Pſalms with a, *Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord.* Hallelujah.

Nor does it invalidate what has now been delivered, that ſome Men have, even by Devout Perſons, been blam'd for too much Devotion: for, it was not an exceſs of Love, but a want of Diſcretion, that was guilty of their faults; The Expreſſions of our Love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild Phancies, but by his revealed Will, (as Chriſt ſayes, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*) and therefore it is very poſſible to be Too devout, not becauſe any Expreſſion of *Seraphick Love* can be made with too much Ardency, whilſt 'tis conſider'd abſtractedly in it ſelf, and irrelatively to the reſt; But becauſe that there being ſeveral duties of Love, which require an Ardency of it, 'tis injurious to exerciſe all that in one alone, or a few, that belongs equally to the neglected others. We muſt not (as too many Profeſſors are now wont to do, of whoſe error you may receive a fuller account in ſome other Papers) daſh in pieces the two Tables of the Law againſt one another; But muſt ſo *love GOD with all our hearts*, as *to love our Neighbour as our ſelves.* *Sect.* 4.

ſelves. You know what our Saviour ſaith to the Phariſees, that Tithed Mint, and Cummin, with a neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, thoſe weightier matters of the Law; *Theſe ought you (ſaith he) to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* And indeed this Partiality, *Lindamor*, which makes us diſplay ſo much of the ſtrength and vigour of our Spirits in ſome favourite-Duties, that we can but languidly and perfunctorily perform thoſe others, we are leſs fond of; begets in Devotion a Diſeaſe, not unlike that new one in Children we call the *Rickets*, which ſome learned Phyſicians do not improbably conceive to ariſe from the Unequal Nutrition of the parts. For though none of them receive Exceſſive Nouriſhment, yet ſome of them receiving as much as is convenient for them, and thereby growing up to their natural bigneſs, whilſt others are leſs nouriſh'd than (were the Body healthful) they would be, do grow ſo little, that the ſounder parts ſeem Over-grown, and ſo the diſproportion betwixt Them and the Ricketing ones makes the whole Body they compoſe miſ-ſhapen and unwieldy. But, *Lindamor*, this proves not that we can love God too much, but only that we may imploy too much of that Love, in this or that way of expreſſing it. Whilſt we are

Mat. 23. 23.

(as

(as *Job* ſpeaks) *Inhabitants of theſe houſes of clay*, there are many Duties, which do as well challenge an Intenſity of our affections, as thoſe which relate more immediately to God. As St. *Paul* tells us, That there is difference betwixt married and ſingle Perſons, the affections of the one being at liberty, to devote themſelves more undiſtractedly to God, whereas thoſe of the other are diſtracted; (as *Adam*'s were, betwixt his Maker and his Rib.) But where a direct and immediate expreſſion of Love to God defrauds not any other Duty, there it is free from the danger of Exceſs. Though Praiers may eaſily be too long, and Faſts grow exorbitant; yet Chriſt could ſpend the whole night in Praier, and Faſt forty days without immoderateneſs, when the other expreſſions of his Love to his Father, and the other exerciſes of his Mediatory Function, were not thereby diſturb'd, but further'd and promoted. And ſo *Elijah* might inculpably faſt long, when that faſting did not diſable him to proſecute his journey to the Mount of God; and though juſt men here on Earth muſt expreſs their Love to their Maſter by (that buſey diſtracting, and remoter way of Service) Tradeing with his Talent truſted to them; yet when their diveſture of Mortality diſpenſes them from thoſe

Job 4.19

1 Cor. 7. 32,33,34

1 King 19 2.

those laborious and avocating duties to distressed Christians, and their own secular Relations, which are here requisite to be perform'd; their Glorifi'd spirits may now, without any Immoderate devotion, imploy, I say not, their Time, but their Eternity it self, in Conversing with God, and following the Lamb whithersoever he goes. And congruously I observe, that the four mysterious Beasts, allow'd to approach neareſt to the Throne of God, though their many wings, and more numerous eyes, intimate them of a very active nature, are represented to us in the Apocalypse, as addicted but to one imployment, ceasing *neither day nor night from saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*; and from *giving Glory, and Honor, and Thanks unto him.* And of *those that have whited their Robes in the blood of the Lamb*, this account is in the same Book given us, *that they are before the Throne of God, and serve Him day and night in his Temple.* So true is it, that no Degree of Seraphick Love can be Excessive, nay, not any Expression of it Immoderate, unless it be made so, not by its Greatness, but by its Usurpation, whereby it either ingrosses or invades what belongs to its injur'd and languishing Associates. Our Love unto the Creatures is a Present, but unto God it is a Tribute, and though we may

Rev. 4. 6, 7.

vers. 8.

Rev. 7. 14, 15.

may eaſily play the Prodigals in parting (over-freely) with our Gifts, we can ſcarce be ſo in the payment of our Debts; for, be the Summs never ſo vaſt we pay away, their being Due, in ſpite of their being Great, makes the Diſburſement too much an Act of Juſtice, to be one of Profuſneſs. *Seraphick Love*, (whoſe Paſſionateneſs is its beſt Complexion) has then moſt approach'd its nobleſt meaſure, when it can leaſt be meaſur'd: nor ought its Extent to admit any other Limits than an utter Diſability to exceed thoſe that terminate it. For he alone loves God as much as he Ought, that loving Him as much as he Can, ſtrives to repair the deplor'd imperfection of that Love, with an extream Regret to find his Love no Greater. Such a ſublimity of Love will beſt entitle you to the Conſolation accruing from that memorable paſſage of St. *John*, where he ſays, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him.* Which ſupplies me with a forcible Inducement, to invite you to an eager aſpiring to a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it may render Self-denial ſo eaſie, that 'twill (at laſt) almoſt diveſt that name. For, this ſublimer Love being, by an intimate conjuction With its Object, wholly devoted To it, and throughly refined from all baſe Droſs of ſel- 1 Ioh. 4. 16.

ſelfiſhneſs and intereſt, nobly begets a moſt ſtrict Union of our Wills with God's, or (rather) a perfect Submiſſion of the one to the other. And thus, when it is become Your Will to obey His, no diſpenſations of Providence will immoderately diſquiet you, for, you poſſeſs your Wiſhes in General, and in Bulk, though poſſibly not always in Retail. For, your chiefeſt Deſire being to ſee your Maker's Will fulfill'd, your knowledge of his being the Soveraign and uncontroll'd Diſpoſer of the Events, aſſures you, that all Accidents that can befall you, are but exact Accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of Yours, ſo far forth as that is included and compriz'd in His. When you have Reſign'd, or rather Conſign'd your expropriated Will (If I may ſo call it) to God, and thereby (as it were) entruſted him to Will for you; all his Diſpoſals of, and his Diſpenſations towards you, are, in effect, the Acts of your own Will, with the advantage of their being Directed and Specified by Him. An Advantage that does at once aſſure you both of their Rectitude and Succeſs. God's Wiſdom, Power, and Love to you conſider'd, how much more happy muſt you be in your Options of his chuſing for you, than your immediate own? The Patient thinks himſelf obliged to gratifie his Phyſician for chuſing

ſing for him what ſorts of meat he is to feed on; though the Doctor be wont to make ſuch a choice for him, as deprives him of the Diſhes he beſt Likes, and oftentimes confines him to thoſe he Loaths. Alas, how often might God ſay of our Requeſts, as Chriſt did of thoſe of the two aſpiring Diſciples, *Ye know not what ye ask*? I admire, and bluſh to read in an Heathen Satyriſt ſo Heavenly a Leſſon, as,

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris:
Nam pro Jucundis utilia quæque dabunt Dî,
Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi: nos animorum
Impulſu, & cæca pravaque cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualiſque futura ſit uxor.

Unto the wiſer Gods the care permit,
Of what's for us and our affairs moſt Fit.
They will for Pleaſant things the Beſt conſer;
To whom Man is, than to himſelf, more dear.
We by our Blinder Paſſions led aſtray,
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuſe us out of Love, Knowing

Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

The conſideration of which made a Heathen Philoſopher ſay, That he was wont only in general tearms to beg Good things of the Gods, leaving it to them to determine what things were Good for him. And indeed, our own Wiſhes are but too commonly as blind as *Rachel*'s who having ſo eagerly longed for Children, that ſhe impatiently cries, *Give me Children or elſe I dye,* died in Child-bearing: And as deſtructive to the Wiſhers, as their Longings prov'd to the murmuring *Iſraelites*, who loathing the wholeſome Manna (that *Bread of Angels*) God had provided for them, ate their own Bane in the Fleſh they had ſo greedily luſted for. Thus, *Lindamor*, that ſo-affrighting virtue of Self-denial proves to be little more than a Son's Letter of Attorney to his Father, of whoſe paternal Kindneſs and conſummate Abilities in the management of affairs, his confidence amounts unto a certainty. Nay, till my ſecond Thoughts check'd the over-forward Impetuoſity of my firſt, I was about to add; Since God reſents an Infinite ſatisfaction in the accompliſhment of his own Will, your Making over your whole Will to God, will impart to you that Felicity, proportion'd to the degree

Gen. 35. 18.

Num. 11. 33.

degree of the Reſignment. And, as the Eye, whileſt by the Optick Nerve ty'd unto the Head, ſo chain'd, can taſte delights, which it is dead to, being once ſerv'd from it, though (otherwiſe) it enjoy the beſt Condition of which its inanimate Nature can be ſuppos'd to be capable: So may your Will by an Identity or Sameneſs (in Tendency, though not it Nature) with your Maker's, as 'twere Engrafted into God's, receive a New and an Enlarg'd capacity, which will enable you to contain, and reliſh Joys, highly tranſcending thoſe, which the fulleſt Fruition of your private wiſhes were able to Create. Thus Self-denial is a kind of holy Aſſociation with God, and (by making you his Partner) intereſſes you in all his happineſs, and acquiſitions. And conſonantly we ſee that Glorifi'd Saints and Bleſſed Angels, whoſe Will have the moſt exquiſite and exact Conformity to God's, enjoy a Happineſs moſt approaching His; whereas the Apoſtate Spirits, in a confirm'd Repugnancy to his Will, find the extremity of Wretchedneſs.

But though I dare not own, *Lindamor*, *Sect.* 5 ſo bold a Sally, yet I dare without Scruple improve the Diſcourſe that preceded it, to make out to you an advantagious Difference of *Seraphick Love* from Ordinary Flames. For, he that makes a preſent of his heart

heart to any Mortal Beauty, even by her welcoming it, and lodging it with her own, grows subject to have it wounded in her Breast. Those misfortunes reach Him that would otherwise terminate in Her: Her afflictions torment him, whilst his own reprieve him; and the *Felicity* of two Persons grows requisite to make one Happy. The letting out our Love to mutable Objects, doth but Inlarge our hearts, and make them the wider Marks for fortune, and capable of being wounded in more places: For although Love may as well make us participate the Joys, as relent the Infelicities of the Parties lov'd; yet even the least unhappy Persons do in so fickle and so tempestuous a Sea, as we all find this World, meet with so many more either cross Winds, or stormy Gusts, than prosperous Gales; and we are so much more sensible of Pain, than Pleasure, (an Aking-Corn, though less than a Sickness, unfitting us to relish the otherwise perfect health of the whole Body) that even Friendship it self, though a much Calmer affection than Love, ought to be declin'd, as injurious to our Quiet, did we consider it, but as a Partnership of Fortunes, not an Exercise of Virtues. But he, whose wiser Love settles it self on God, is not only by the Immutable and even Essential happiness of that Ado-

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rable Object, ſecur'd from Participated infelicities; but finds his perſonal croſſes and diſtreſſes ſweetned by conſidering, that What he moſt loves is moſt Happy, and as able as willing in due time to make Him ſo. And though *Seraphick Love* makes us partake but God's Felicities, yet his Acceptance of it makes him reſent Our Sorrows: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, ſays the Prophet, of *God*, and of the *Iſraelites*. And ſo the Son of God, (who is ſo much One with thoſe that love him, that both he as the Head, and they as the Members, are ſometimes, as making up One Body, call'd by One Name, Chriſt) though as high as Heaven, above the reach of perſonal or immediate Perſecutions, call'd out to *Saul* for an intention of harming thoſe that lov'd him, *Saul, Saul, Why perſecuteſt thou me*? And, to demonſtrate the tenderneſs of this Compaſſion, the Prophet ſays to the return'd *Iſraelites*, concerning God, *He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his Eye*. Nor is God's Compaſſion like a Miſtreſſes, a Grieving only, & an uſeleſs Pity, whereby the ſuffering Lover is oftentimes leſſe comforted, as it proceeds from her Kindneſs, than afflicted, becauſe it breeds her Diſquiet: But God's is a Compaſſion, though Active, yet Serene, and worthy of Himſelf, which, without producing the Diſcompoſure,

Eſa. 63. 3.

1 Cor. 12. 12.

Zach. 2. 8.

ſure, produces the Effects of the the moſt ſenſible Pity, by engaging him to a timely Relief and Reſcue: As that freſhly menti-on'd Expreſſion, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, is immediately follow'd by, *And the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of Old.* Yes, this Pity, for its not diſturbing God's Happineſs, enclines him not the leſs to expreſs a ſenſe of our Miſeries, and makes us find (to uſe a Scripture phraſe as I would render it) χάριν εἰς ἴυκαιρον βοήθειαν, *Grace for an opportune relief*; I ſay, with the Divine Writer, *an Opportune* or *Seaſonable relief*; becauſe it comes not always when it is moſt Deſired, but when it is moſt Fit; And when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future things in his Proſpect, is fitteſt to determine. Chriſt's words to his Diſciples, (*It is not for you to know the Times or the Seaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power*) are applicable to more Caſes than that which occaſion'd them. The *Canaaniti∫h* woman muſt put up a Refuſal, and the reproachful name of a Dog, (which yet, by the way, was a Paraphraſe commonly enough us'd by the Jews of the Heathen, and as ſuch was underſtood by this Ἑλληνὶς *Gentile not Greek.*) The *Iſraelites* (compri-

Heb. 4. 16.

Act. 1. 7.

Math. 7. 27.

The Text refers her

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ſing the Patriarchs their progenitors) were reduced to wait four hundred and thirty years, e'r they were introduced into the promis'd Land; and during a great part of that long ſpace of time languiſh'd and groan'd under the heavy Burthens, and other as heavy Preſſures, of the as cruelly as unſucceſsfully politick *Egyptians*. St. *Paul* himſelf pray'd the Lord thrice for the removal of that rude σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ, *Thorn to the fleſh* (whatever that may mean.) Nay, of the Bleſſed Virgin-Mother her ſelf, her Divine Son would not be found till the third Day, though ſhe ſought him ſorrowing. And *Lazarus*, to whom, even during his Sickneſs, he vouchſafed (a Title, to which all *Cæſar's* were but Trifles) the ſtyle of Friend, (which emboldned the pious *Mary* to Paraphraſe him by a, *He whom thou lov'ſt*) was permitted not only to Lye adying, but to Dye; his, Reſcue being deferr'd, till it was thought impoſſible; and, was ſo indeed to any leſs power than Omnipotence. Which manifeſts, that as no degree of Diſtreſs is unrelievable by his Power, ſo no Extremity of it is conſiſtent with his Compaſſion, no, not with his Friendſhip. He whoſe Spirit inſpired the Prophets, is in the laſt of them repreſented under the notion of a Refiner: and 'tis not the cuſtom of Refiners to ſnatch the

extraction to *Syrophœnicia* the ſame Region with *Canaan*. Gal. 3. 17. Ezek. 28. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 7. Luk. 2. 48. Joh. 11. 2. verſ. 3. Mal. 3. 3.

belov'd Metal out of the Fire, as ſoon as it feels the violence of that purifying Element, nay, nor as ſoon as it is Melted by it, but they let it long endure the brunt of the active Flames, acuated by exciting Blaſts, till it have ſtood its due time in the Fire, and there obtain'd its full Purity and Splendor. And I hope, you will give one that converſes with Furnaces, though he be no Pretender to the Philoſopher's Stone, leave to improve a Chymical Metaphor, and obſerve, that, though in Afflictions, eſpecially National or Publick Calamities, God oftentimes to make no diſtinction betwixt the Objects of his Compaſſion, and thoſe of his Fury, indiſcriminately involving them in the ſame Deſtiny; yet his Pre-ſcience and Intentions make a vaſt Difference, where his Inflictions do not ſeem to make Any; As, when on the ſame Teſt, and with the ſelf-ſame Fire, we urge as well the Gold, as the blended Lead, or Antimony; but with fore-knowing and deſigning ſuch a diſparity in the Events, as to Conſume the Ignobler Minerals, or blow them off into Droſs or Fumes, and make the Gold more Pure and full of Luſtre.

Sect. 6. It is true, *Lindamor*, and not to be ſuſpected of Partiality towards a Love which ſo little needs it, to be thought fit to be preferr'd before all other Paſſions) I ſhall acknow-

acknowledge it, that the Happineſs reſulting from thoſe many Prerogatives, I have endeavour'd to diſcover to you in a Tranſcendent degree of *Seraphick Love*, is moderated by (the Effects of that Sublimity) the Eager *Deſires* it creates of a more compleat Fruition, of its perfect and Divine Object. Such aſpiring Sallies of the longing Soul made the languiſhing Spouſe in the *Canticles* cry out, *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love.* Such made the raviſh'd *Apoſtle* deſire *to return* (for ſo I ſhould rather tranſlate the word ἀναλῦσαι there, and ſo I find it * elſewhere to ſignifie) *and to be with Chriſt*: And the Inſpir'd Poet thus expreſſes his longings to the Bleſſed Object of them, *As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, ſo panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My ſoul thirſteth for God, for the living God: When ſhall I come and appear before God!* But, *Lindamor*, it was fit, that to elevate our thoughts and wiſhes to Heaven, ſome peculiar and elſe-where Incommunicable degrees of Joy, ſhould be reſerved for us there. And 'tis a good ſign, and ſuch as worldly Objects cannot boaſt, when the Incompleatneſs of our Seraphick Lover's happineſs in his fruitions, proceeds not from their want of Satisfactorineſs, but his want of an Entire Poſſeſſion of them.

Cant. 2. 5.

Phil. 1: 23.

*Luk. 12. 36.

Pſal. 42. 1, 2.

And let me tell you, *Lindamor*, that even this uneaſie State of Separation, is ſweetned with as much Ally as is conſiſtent with its being a Grief. For the Divine Evidence and Teacher of God's love, pronouncing a Thirſt after Perfection to be a Title to it, (according to thoſe Scriptures, *Bleſſed* Mat. 5. 6. *are they that hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs: for, they ſhall be ſatisfied.* And, Rev. 22. 17. *Let him that is a thirſt come, and whoſoever will, let him take the water of Life freely*) and the Joys of Heaven being ſo vaſt, that they diffuſe their Nature to all the grounded Hopes men have to obtain them; each new Aſſurance is a new *Degree* of them, and is acceptable to our Hope, though uneaſie to our *Deſires*. And theſe Baitings at compleat Felicity ſhould not be more unwelcome for the preſent Diſquiet they ſuppoſe, than the Contrary for the Zeal they argue, and the Felicity they promiſe. For this production of the Spirit in our hearts may be juſtly tearmed, as the Spirit himſelf in Scripture is, *An earneſt*; which, 2 Cor. 5. 5. though by being ſuch, it confeſſes it ſelf not to be the Entire ſumm, yet is not onely a Part of it, but a Pledge: And, *Lindamor*, how Supportable is this thus-qualifi'd Ally of the Joys of *Seraphick Love*, in compariſon of the Diſquiets and the Torments that are wont to attend Senſual Love?

Love? I ſhall not loſe time to enumerate how many it is ſuppoſed to have ſent to their Graves; becauſe, though I find thoſe Tragical Stories rife enough in Romances, yet I find them Rarities every where but in thoſe Fabulous Compoſures; and though I have had the Curioſity to viſit ſome of thoſe warmer Regions, where the Flames of Love are thought to burn with more violence, yet (bating the *Duels* and the Pox) I remember not to have obſerv'd Love to have ever been the *Death* of any Man: unleſs, ſpeaking like Philoſophers, who make Reaſon the Eſſential Conſtituent Form of a Man, we will affirm, that Love, by dethroning Reaſon, though it leave the Lover alive, doth kill the Man But, though I am loath to put ſo bad a Complement upon Mankind, as to ſay, That Love is wont to *Deſtroy* Men's lives; yet I think it would be no Calumny to ſay, It much Diſquiets them. I could ask you, How long many a Lover muſt continue a Servant to purchaſe the Honour of being taken notice of to be ſo? And I could recruit that Queſtion with pretty ſtore of others of the like nature, but that I ſuppoſe your Memory will ſave my Pen the labour of repreſenting to you the Torments of Love, which they that Feel them, would little leſs juſtly than they do frequently ſtyle Martyrdoms, if the

Greatneſs only, without the Cauſe and Object of Men's ſufferings ſuffic'd to make them Martyrs. And though the Condition of Lovers be in Romances ſo dexterouſly and delightfully deſcrib'd, that not only Sanguine Readers are tranſported, but even I my ſelf have been ſurpriſed into Inclinations, to Admire and Envy their Felicity; yet when ſome I was concern'd for, have been really concern'd and engag'd in ſuch adventures, my Envy quickly turn'd into Pity. For, the Repulſes, the Regrets, the Jealouſies, the Fears, the Abſences, the *Deſpairs*, and the reſt of the afflicting *Diſquiets* of Lovers; though in well-writ Romances they are ſoon Read over by the diverted Peruſer; yet they are not ſo ſoon Weather'd out, nor ſo eaſily Supported by the Diſconſolate Lover, whoſe Infelicities, though they may be perhaps ſo handſomely deplored, as to *Delight* the Reader; yet truſt me, *Lindamor*, 'tis a much happier condition to be Free from misfortunes, than to be able to Complain Eloquently of them. And as I have with delight beheld a Storm excellently drawn by ſome rare Artiſt's Penſil; but when I was this Spring toſt by the rude Winds, that blew me out of *Holland*, I found a real Storm a very troubleſome and uneaſie thing: So the condition of a Lover, though, drawn by

by a ſmooth Pen, it is wont ſtrangely to affect and pleaſe us; yet when Men are really engaged in it, they find it full of hardſhips and diſquiet. 'Tis a much better condition to be Look'd on, than Embrac'd; and Experience gives Men of it much (ſadder and) more unwelcom Notions than *Deſcription* did. Nor phancy, *Lindamor*, that the Troubleſomneſs of your ſufferings in Love proceeded but from their not being Acceptable to her for whom you endur'd them; for, had your Miſtreſs crown'd them with Myrtle, and prov'd as kind to you as *Hymen* could have made her, yet, I fear, ſhe could have Recompenc'd you but by *Diſabuſing* you, and could not have freed you from the Need of happineſs, but only from a Miſtake concerning it. For, methinks, *Lindamor*, moſt of theſe Tranſitory Goods, that we are ſo fond of, may not unfitly be reſembled to the Senſitive Plant, which you have admir'd at *Sion* Garden; for, As, though we Gaze on it with Attention and Wonder, yet when we come to Touch it, the Coy deluſive Plant immediately ſhrinks in its diſplayed leaves, and Contracts it ſelf into a Form and *Dimenſions*, diſadvantagiouſly differing from the former; which it again recovers by degrees, when touch'd no longer: So theſe Objects, that charm us at a diſtance, and whilſt

whilſt gaz'd on with the eyes of Expectation and *Deſire*; when a more immediate Poſſeſſion hath put them into our Hands, their former Luſtre vaniſhes, and they appear quite differing things from what before they ſeem'd; though after *Deprivation* or Abſence hath made us forget their Emptineſſe, and we be reduc'd to look upon them again at a Diſtance, they recover in moſt Men's eyes their former Beauty, and are as capable as before to inveigle and delude us. I muſt add, *Lindamor*, that when I compare to the Senſitive Plant moſt of theſe Tranſitory things, that are flatter'd with the title of Goods, I do not out of that number except moſt Miſtreſſes. For, though I am no ſuch enemy to Matrimony, as ſome (for want of underſtanding the Raillery, I have ſometimes us'd in ordinary diſcourſe) are pleas'd to think me, and would not refuſe you my Advice (though I would not ſo readily give you my Example) to turn Votary to *Hymen*; yet I have obſerv'd ſo few Happy Matches, and ſo many unfortunate ones, and have ſo rarely ſeen Men love their Wives at the rate they did, whilſt they were their Miſtreſſes; that I wonder not, that Legiſlators thought it neceſſary to make Marriages Indiſſoluble, to make them Laſting. And I cannot fitlier compare

Marriage

Marriage than to a Lottery; for in both, he that Ventures may Succeed, and may Miſs, and if he draw a Prize, he hath a rich Return of his Venture: But in both Lotteries there lies pretty ſtore of Blanks for every Prize. And for your particular, *Lindamor*, the World is much miſtaken in both your Humors, if *Hermione's* and Yours be not ſo unſuitable, that (to make haſte from ſo nice a Subject) had ſhe juſtifi'd your expectation of her kindneſs, you would have poſſeſs'd the Perſon without poſſeſſing the Happineſs you expected: And might have found your ſelf as ſenſibly diſappointed by her Grant as you were by her Change.

But I forget, *Lindamor*, that I reſolv'd not to inſiſt on Parallels, and therefore, inſtead of proſecuting the Diſcourſe my Pen has ſlipt into, concerning the advantages of *Seraphick*, compar'd with ordinary, Love; I ſhall venture to encourage you to the Former, by ſhewing you, that your paſt addictedneſs to the Later, may prove ſerviceable to you in it: Yes, *Lindamor*, I ſhall not ſcruple to tell you, that your ſtrong Paſſion for *Hermione* may not a little facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking all the Chains, excepting one, that faſtned your Affection to unſatisfying Objects, and reſtrain'd it from ſoaring to the ſublimeſt;

blimeſt; and partly, by exalting your Paſſion to a Height fit for *Seraphick* flames. For, Love hath this of Noble, that it makes us diviſt our ſelves of Selfiſhneſs, ſlight fortune, quiet, ſafety, honour, life, and all our own Concernments, when their coming into Competition with the Lov'd parties *Intereſts*, may render their ſacrifice acceptable to her; and makes us think Goods or Ills deſerve thoſe names, but as they come to us From or Through Her. You could ſcarce have learn'd a better Leſſon, even from a much better *Maſter*; for, Love having thus accuſtom'd you to (what is thought moſt difficult in that Virtue) the Acts of Self-denial, you need almoſt but Tranſer your flames from an Inferiour and Miſtaken, to their True and Nobleſt Object, and you will have exalted and refined your Love into Devotion; to the latter of which, a ſublime Elevation of the firſt is ſuch a Diſpoſition, as the having formerly by looſer Airs and (perchance) wanton Songs, learn'd to Improve and to Command ones Voice, is, to the skill of Singing thoſe devout Hymns and Heavenly Anthems, in which the Church-Militant ſeems ambitious to emulate the Triumphant, and Eccho back the ſolemn Praiſes and Hallelujahs of the Celeſtial Quire. And, as by Hunting, though (poſſibly) we follow but

ſome

ſome poor fugitive Hare, or ſome ſuch Trifling Game, we gain that Vigor, that Sufferance, and Agility, that fits us for the Toils and Military Hardſhips that are exacted in the perſute of Glory, and of Empire: So though in Love (*Devotion's* Prenticeſhip) the Courted Creature be often conſiderable enough, to make our Elections fit to be numbered among ſuch as thoſe that made Love be Painted Blind; yet in the Progreſs and Conduct of our Paſſion, we contract ſuch diſ-intereſſed and reſign'd Habitudes, as, being preferr'd to ſerve Cœleſtial Objects, do excellently qualifie us for Devotion. And, in effect, a fervent Love ſeems little elſe, than Devotion miſ-addreſt, where our own very Expreſſions may ſerve to diſabuſe us; For, when you give your Miſtreſs the Style of Goddeſs, and talk of nothing to her, but Offering up of hearts, Adoring, Sacrifices, Martyrdoms; does not all this imply, that though it be ſaid to her, 'tis meant to a Divinity: which is ſo much the True and Genuine Object of Men's Love, that we cannot exalt that Paſſion for any Other, without inveſting it with the Notion and Attributes of God? As Children diſcloſe the inbred kindneſſe they have for theſe Perſons, by calling the Babies they moſt doat upon by their dear Mothers, or lov'd Nurſes Names. And, as *Aaron*,

and

Exod. 32 verſ. 4, 5. In the latter of which it is expreſly ſaid, that the Feaſt was proclamed יהוה, *To Jehovah*, the peculiar Name of the true God.

and the revolting Jews, by juſtifying to themſelves their Adoration of the Idols they had ſet up, by attributing the Title of God to what they Ador'd, did tacitly acknowledge Adoration to be due onely to the Deity: So does a Lover, by naming what he Worſhips, a Divinity, tacitly confeſſe the Deity to be the proper Object of that higheſt and peculiar ſtrain of Worſhip.

Sect. 8. And this Truth, *Lindamor*, the very Fickleneſſe of Lovers concurs to teſtifie: For, what Men call, and think Inconſtancy, is nothing but a Chaſe of Perfect Beauties, which our Love fruitleſly follows, and ſeeks in ſeveral Objects, becauſe he finds it not entire in any One; for, Creatures have but ſmall and obſcure fragments of it, which cannot Fix, nor Satisfie an Appetite, born For, and (though unwillingly) aſpiring Unto, God: Who is proclam'd the true and proper Object of our Love, as well by Men's fickleneſs to Women, as the Angels conſtancy to Him. Juſt as the trembling reſtleſneſſe of the Needle in any but the North Point of the Compaſſe, proceeds from, and manifeſts its inclination to the Pole; its Paſſion for which, both its Wavering and its Reſt bear equal witneſſe to. That unſatisfi'dneſſe with tranſitory Fruitions, that Men deplore as the Unhappineſſe of their Nature, is indeed the Privilege of it; as 'tis the Prærogative of men

men not to care for, or be capable of, being pleas'd with Whiſtles, Hobby-horſes, and ſuch fond Toys as Children doat upon, and make the ſole Objects of their Deſires and Joys. And by this you may, *Lindamor*, in ſome degree imagine the unimaginable Suavity, that the fixing of ones Love one God is able to bleſſe the Soul with; ſince, by ſo Indulgent a Father, and Competent a Judge, as God himſelf, the decree'd Uncontentingneſſe of all other goods, is thought richly repaired by its being but an Aptneſſe to prove a Rife to our Love's ſettling there. *Sect.* 9.

And hitherto, my deareſt *Lindamor*, I have endeavour'd to recommend unto you *Seraphick Love*, by mentioning ſome of its Properties, which ſeem to relate more to the Love it ſelf, than to the divine Object of it. But I fear you'l think, I have too long entertain'd you with Conſiderations, which beſides that they are not altogether the Importanteſt that belong to this Diſcourſe; I have been by haſte reduc'd to Pen in the unaccurate Order, wherein they offer'd themſelves to My thoughts, not the Method wherein I ſhould have preſented them to Yours.

And therefore, *Lindamor*, ſince the Nobleſt and Supreme Motives to the Love of God conſiſt in his own infinite Perfections and *Sect.* 10.

Præro-

Prærogatives; and ſince, the Properties of God's Love to us do advantage us much more, (and conſequently are likelier to endear Devotion to us) than thoſe of ours to Him: The former not onely moving God to Kindle in us, both to Cheriſh and Foment, and (if our own wilful extinction interpoſe not) to Crown the latter: For both theſe reaſons, I ſay, *Lindamor*, I doubt not but you'l think it Seaſonable for me to proceed, to conſider that Higher ſort of Motives to Devotion, and to evince, that the ſeveral things which are wont moſt to Engage and Heighten our affections, do, in a peculiar and tranſcendent manner, Shine forth and Conſtellate in God. That, you know, which enamour'd you of *Hermione*, I need not prove to you, to have been your ſuppoſing her full of Lovelineſſe and Excellencies in her ſelf; and your believing, that the Love ſhe vouchſafed you was Great, Free, Conſtant, or Advantagious to you. And that all theſe properties do not onely eminently Exiſt, but illuſtriouſly Concur in God, and in his Love; I muſt now, *Lindamor*, (with ſtrong deſires of doing it Proſperouſly) attempt to manifeſt.

Sect. 11. Firſt then, our higheſt Love is made God's due by the Excellency and Prerogative of his Nature. But, truſt me, *Lindamor*, when (neceſſitated by a Method exacted

acted by the nature of this Diſcourſe) I find my ſelf engaged to ſay ſomething by way of celebration of God's Perfections: I am very ſenſible, I can but detract from what I deſire to Praiſe, and muſt unevitably appear unable to ſpeak Worthily of a Theme, to which, even Seraphims themſelves cannot do Right. And if, as the Scripture aſſures us, thoſe things never fell under the Senſes, nor entred the Thoughts of men, which God has reſerv'd for thoſe that love him; how Ineffable and Incomprehenſible muſt thoſe things be which he has reſerv'd for Himſelf? the infinite Superiority of his Nature above all Created Beings, placing a vaſt diſparity betwixt his greateſt communicated Vouchſafements, and his Boundleſſe, and therefore to Creatures Incommunicable, Perfections. 1 Cor. 2. 9

Wonder not therefore, *Lindamor*, that my weak Eyes dare not dwell long upon an Object, which they cannot ſtedfaſtly gaze on long without being dazl'd: And do not marvel, that I ſcruple not to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones: Both God's Nature and his Word declaring him to be *exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe*. If it were ſeaſonable, *Lindamor*, to entertain our ſelves but with thoſe Attributes of God, which are Legible Neh. 9. 5.

or Conſpicuous in the Creation; We may there diſcern the admirable Traces of an immenſe Power, ſuch unſearchable Wiſdom, and ſuch exuberant Goodneſs as may juſtly raviſh us to an Amazement at them, rather than a bare Admiration of them. And I muſt needs acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that when with bold Teleſcopes I ſurvey the Old and Newly diſcover'd Stars and Planets that adorn the upper Region of the World; and when with excellent Microſcopes I diſcern in otherwiſe Inviſible Objects, the unimitable Subtility of Nature's curious Workmanſhip; and when, in a word, by the help of Anatomical Knives, and the light of Chymical Furnaces, I ſtudy the Book of Nature, and conſult the Gloſſes of *Ariſtotle*, *Epicurus*, *Paracelſus*, *Harvey*, *Helmont*, and other learn'd Expoſitors of that Inſtructive Volume; I find my ſelf oftentimes reduc'd to exclame with the Pſalmiſt, *How manifold are thy works, O Lord? in wiſdom haſt thou made them all!* And when I have been loſing my ſelf in admiration of what I Underſtand not, but enough to Admire, and not to Comprehend; I am often obliged to interrupt or break off my Enquiries, by applying to the Works of God's Creation the Expreſſion us'd by St. *Paul*, of thoſe of his providence, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how*

Pſal. 104. 24.

Rom. 11. 33.

how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! And Exclamations of this Nature may the attentive Consideration of any other of God's Atributes deservedly produce. But having elſe-where treated of this Subject in a peculiar Diſcourſe, I ſhall now, *Lindamor*, invite you to conſider with me, how much You, and thoſe that are Conſcious to their having Virtue enough in themſelves, to make them prize it in Others, are in love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, and thoſe other *Heroes*, that did Ennoble, and almoſt Exceed Mankind, upon the bare knowledge of their Virtues; although from them we derive no Perſonal advantage, (their Death having numerous Ages, preceded our Nativity.) Since then we pay ſo much diſintereſt Love to ſome few Faint and ill-refin'd Virtues, that ne'r did profit us: how much on ſuch a Score, and at that Rate, ſhould we Love him, who ſo poſſeſſes all Perfections, that each of his Perfections is Infinite? Were you and I our own Creators, *Lindamor*, and wholly independent upon God, without either Need or Hope to taſte his Bounty, his native Excellencies, and what he has done for Others, ſhould ſurely Raviſh us, and Enamor us of Him. Though his Benefits to us did not entitle him to our Love, his Eſſence (the Source and one-

ly Motive of those Benefits) would give him a Right to it; and though we ow'd him nought for what We are, we yet should owe him Love for what He is. He is that glorious Sun, From whom (as Beams) all created Perfections flow, and In whom they all concentre. To omit God's Soveraign Majesty, (which places him so high, that but to own for him so Familiar and Levelling an affection as Love, much more to expect to be Relov'd by Him, were not the least sawcy Presumption Man could be guilty of, did not his own Commands make it a Duty.) Not to insist on this, I say, Let us a while consider that proper and peculiar attraction of Love, his Loveliness; which is such, that, did we but once see it, all Creature-competitions (even we being Judges) would then be as Impossible as
Esa. 6. 7. they are now Unjust. In *the Fifth Evangelist's* Prophetick Vision, the Seraphims themselves (those glorious Ornaments of the Cœlestial Hierarchy) are represented as Covering their faces in God's presence, either, Blushing at their Comparative Deformity, or Unable to Sustain the unqualifi'd Splendor of so Divine Brightness; whence perhaps it became of old the Jewish fashion (as some frequent Expressions in in their Writers intimate) when they went to Pray, to Veil their heads and faces; (though

(though now I have in their Synagogues ſeen them onely Cover their heads, not their faces, with thoſe white Garments they wear at their publick Devotions.) And, *Lindamor*, if *Moſes*'s face, but by a few days Converſe with God, reflected ſuch a Light as dazl'd mortal Eyes; and if his ſwift Poſts the Angels, when ſent on Errands to us here on Earth, even when they may be ſuppoſ'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) to wear their Travelling Cloaths, and ſtoop as much to our frailty in the Form, as the Region, they appear to us in, do, in ſpight of that darkning Condeſcenſion, ſo much Tranſcend all Objects here on Earth, that the Scripture often mentions, That even thoſe that aſpir'd to imitate their Virtues, were confounded at their Preſence: And if, in this veiling Habit, they appear ſo glorious, that their thus diſadvantag'd Beauty is made the Complement and Hyperbole of that Quality; what may we, or rather, what may we not, conclude of God himſelf, of whom the Scripture ſays, *He that planted the Ear ſhall he not hear? he that formed the Eye ſhall he not ſee?* Pſal. 94. 9. That is, He that Imparts a Faculty, or an Excellence to the Creature, ſhall not he himſelf much more eminently Poſſeſſe it? And in effect, the moſt unblemiſh'd Created Beauties are but faint Shadows (or trulier, Foils) of His. Thoſe drops of Prettineſſe,

ſcatteringly ſprinkled amongſt the Creatures, were deſign'd to Defæcate and Exalt our Conceptions, not to Inveigle or Detain our Paſſions; for, God did ne'r intend them to Terminate our Love, but onely by our Eyes to exalt our Faith above them, and by the Beauties our Sight can apprehend, to raiſe us to a Confidence, that there is in their Author more than we can either See or Comprehend. Like *Elijah*'s fiery Chariots, though they be Pure and Bright, and conſiſt of the Nobleſt and Glorioueſt materials, they are meant by God but to carry us up to Him. And as the Patriarch's Steward was furniſh'd with ſo ſumptuous an Equipage to court *Rebecca*, not for himſelf, but for *Iſaac*; ſo all the Lovelineſſe imparted to the Creature is lent it, but to give us ſome more inlarg'd Conceptions of that vaſt Confluence and Immenſity that exuberates in God. To make the righteſt uſe of Fading Beauties, you muſt conſider God and them, as you were wont to do your Miſtreſs's Picture and its Cryſtal Cover: Where, though that native Glaſſe were Pure and Lovely, and very richly edg'd, yet to gaze on it was not the Chiefeſt Buſineſſe of your Eye; nor did you in it Terminate your Sight, but greedily look Through and Beyond it, upon the adored Image that ſolid veil betraid. Me-thinks *Seraphick* and our common

2 King. 2. 11.

Gen. 24. 10. 53.

common *Lovers* behold Exterior Beauties with a Difference reſembling that wherewith Children and Aſtronomers conſider *Galileo*'s Optick Glaſſes, (with one of which *Teleſcopioes* that I remember I ſaw at *Florence*, he merrily boaſted that he had, *Trovato la Corte a Giove*) which the one prizes moſt for what they Appear; the other, for what they Diſcover. For Children contenting themſelves to wonder at the Length, and fall in love with the Workmanſhip and Gildings of the Tube, do thus but Gaze upon them; whereas Aſtronomers look through them, and, ſcarce taking notice of the unuſual Ornaments, or the Shape, employ them to find out unknown Lights in the Sky, and to deſcry in Heaven bright Stars, unſeen before, and other Cœleſtial Novelties and Beauties.

I deny not, *Lindamor*, that God has been pleaſed to adorn ſome of his Creatures with Hints and Impreſſes, as well of his Lovelineſs as his other Excellencies but they do much more faintly and imperfectly reſemble Him, than the counterfeit Sun we ſometimes ſee in a Cloud emulates the True one, by whoſe Refracted and Reflected Beams, ſome acute modern Naturaliſts ſuppoſe it to be produc'd. For though this Derivative Sun ſhine with a not-inconſiderable Luſtre, comparatively to the reſt of the dark *Sect.* 12.

dark Cloud it ennobles, yet is it not onely as much inferiour to the true Sun in Brightneſs, as in Height; but it enjoys alone a Precarious, Dependent, and almoſt Momentary Being, which often it loſes in a very Short time, and never attains to preſerve a very long one. And therefore, to neglect that ſupreme Reſplendency that ſhines in God, for thoſe dim Repreſentations of it, that we ſo doat on in the Creature, is as præpoſterous, and abſur'd, as it were for a Perſian to offer his Sacrifice to a Parhelion, (as the *Greeks* call that Meteor) inſtead of adoring the Sun. And certainly, *Lindamor*, if our Dim ſight, like that of the Prophet's Servant, who ſaw the Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horſes and Chariots of Fire, were privileg'd to diſcern otherwiſe Inviſible Objects; our raviſh'd Eyes would behold Lovelineſs enough in God, to make us inceſſantly exclame in the Language of the Prophet, *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great his Beauty!* Agreeably whereunto we may obſerve, That as the Load-ſtone doth attract moſt powerfully the brighteſt Needles, made of the pureſt Steel, and thoſe that moſt approach it; ſo Angels, who, of all Created Beings, enjoy the unclouded'ſt Light, and the moſt clear Knowledge of their Maker, do love him with a Conſtancy

2 King. 6. 27.

Zach. 9. 17.

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ſo fix'd, that in five thouſand and ſome odd Centuries of Years, (efflux'd ſince the Creation) they could never ſee any thing, either In God, or Out of Him, capable to ſeduce them to a Change. God's Lovelineſs (which is ſuch, that the Eternal Fruition of himſelf Creates even His Felicity) is like rare Muſick, which, though it do delight all its partakers, the Knowingeſt Artiſts ſtill do highlieſt Value, and are moſt raviſh'd with the Tranſportes it produceth, being proportion'd to the degrees of the Skilfulneſs of its admirers. The Apoſtate Spirits indeed deſerted their firſt Station, not frighted thence by any blemiſh they deſcry'd in God; but probably fell by a ſawcy Affectation of a Parity, and (as Divines tell us) a Sacrilegious aſpiring to Perfections, which they were criminally unable to behold, without wiſhing them their own. And for their preſent Separation from God, it is their Curſe and Puniſhment. And I ſhall ingeneouſly confeſſe to you, *Lindamor*, that by the advantagious Idea's I entertain'd of God's Perfections, I have been ſometimes inclin'd to think, that the reaſon why God tells *Moſes*, *Thou canſt not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee me and live*, might be, that, (as Tranſcendent Objects deſtroy the Senſe) ſo Lovely and Glorious a ſight (whoſe Continuance Exod. 33 20.

nuance ſhall make our Happineſs in Heaven) would let in Joys, and would create Deſires, too Mighty for frail Mortality to ſuſtain. The raviſh'd Soul being ſhewn ſuch Game as That, would bate ſo eagerly, that ſhe would break thoſe Leaſhes that tie her to the Body, (and thereby hinder her flight to that wiſh'd Union) and the glad Heart (too narrow a Receptacle for ſo much Joy) to make room for ſuch Gueſts, would ſtretch unto a Rupture. Longing or Joy, have ſometimes ſingly reach'd Degrees, that have made them Fatal; And why then ſhould their Union in ſuch Extremes be thought uncapable of producing the like effect? Nor is it perchance more a Priviledge of the next Life, that we ſhall then ſee God, than that we ſhall ſurvive that glorious Sight: which is too dazling an Object for Mortal Eyes, till (to uſe St. *Paul's* Expreſſion) *our mortal ſhall have put on immortality.* But I muſt no longer loſe my ſelf in a Theme, on which it is ſo eaſie to ſpeak Much, and ſo impoſſible to ſay Enough. If I be not very much miſtaken, they are ſo, who preſume to give us ſatisfactory Definitions of Gods Nature, which we may perhaps more ſafely Define by the Impoſſibility of its being accurately Defined. And I muſt confeſs, I do the leaſt expect the beſt Deſcription of the Divine Nature, from thoſe that

1 Cor. 15. 54.

that are moſt forward to take upon them to Explicate it: For our Words being but the Repreſentations of our Notions, and they being neceſſarily Finite, as our Being; few men are (me-thinks) more likely to be miſtaken in the Nature of what's Infinite, (and conſequently of God's Attributes) than thoſe that think Deſcriptions can comprize it. Nor will an Aſſiduity and Conſtancy of our Speculations herein relieve us: for too fix'd a Contemplation of Gods Eſſence does but the more confound us. As I remember, St. *Paul* tells the Jews, that he *could not ſee for the Glory of that light*, that ſhon from Heaven about him at his Converſion. And this the famous *Simonides* experimentally found, who being ask'd what God was, took a days time to conſider of it; after, being call'd upon for his anſwer, he deſir'd Two days longer to think upon it; and, when they were expir'd, demanded Four days longer; and ſo continu'd a great while, each time Encreaſing his Demands for Reſpite; til, being preſt to give an Account of ſuch a Dilatory way of proceeding, he ingenuouſly acknowledg'd that the longer he Conſider'd Gods Nature, the leſs he Comprehended it. And indeed, Experience teacheth us, that they that gaze ſtedfaſtlieſt on the noon-days Sun, can leaſt of all diſcern what it is, being

Act. 22. 6. 11.

being rather Dazl'd than Inſtructed by ſo confounding an Object. Nor, is it onely, *Lindamor*, a task of too great Difficulty for a meer Man, perfectly to Explicate that Incomprehenſible Nature of God, to which nothing but his own Infinite Underſtanding can be adæquate: But, me-thinks, even to Celebrate God's Perfections, cannot be ſoberly attempted without a very deep ſenſe of a Man's own Unworthineſs and Incapacity. For, the ſame Excellencies that furniſh us with Praiſes, do tranſcend them. And the fruitfulneſs of the Subject may as well deterr, as invite our Pens; ſince, as we are ſure we ſhall not want Theme, ſo we are certain we cannot Dignifie it. And for my part, *Lindamor*, though my Subject exacted of me the Praiſes I have endeavoured to aſcribe to God, yet I ſhould have thought it requiſite rather to decline the Laws of Method, than be reduc'd to Derogate from what I would Extol: If the Neceſſity of Detracting from Gods Perfections were not equal to that of Mentioning them; and if that Neceſſity were not as Glorious to God, as greater Praiſes than we are able to aſcribe him, could be. But, *Lindamor*, having thus done Right to my Method, though I could not to my Theme, I ſhal onely invite you to imitate with me thoſe Perſians, that Adored the Sun, thought the Light

Light he lent them ſerv'd but to make the ſource of it Admired, and not to Pry into his abſtruſe Eſſence with it. And though I might ſay much more concerning God's Perfections, I muſt henceforth think Silence the propereſt Language I can now employ; for 'tis Silence that beſt expreſſes our Wonder: And ſure, Wonder is never more ſeaſonable than when God is the Object; A proſtrate Veneration being the ſafeſt Apprehenſiõ of Him that is Incomprehenſible.

Having thus conſidered, *Lindamor*, how *Sect.* 13. fit an Object God is of our higheſt Love, for what he is in Himſelf; let us now proceed to derive further proofs of the ſame Truth, from what he is to Us, (that your Gratitude may contend with your Reaſon, which ſhall moſt heighten your Devotion) and we ſhall find in the Vaſtneſſe, Freeneſſe, Diſ-intereſtneſſe, Conſtancy, and Advantagiouſneſſe of his Love to us, that more than all the Love we can Pay him, were but a little part of that we owe him.

But for the firſt Attribute, we have aſſigned his Love, (the Greatneſſe of it) it being a General Property, diffuſed Through all the reſt, and conſpicuous in them, it requires now to be treated of apart.

Sect. We ſhall then proceed to the Freeneſſe or unmeritedneſſe of God's love; To believe which ſtrangely Vaſt, we need but conſider,

ſider, that we ſo little could at firſt Deſerve his Love, that he lov'd us even before we had a Being: And our Felicity, in his Decrees, preceded our Exiſtence in this World. God lov'd you numerous Ages before you Were; and his Goodneſſe is ſo entirely its own Motive, that even your Creation (ſince when alone you can pretend to merit his love) is the Effect of it. This Benefit alone were ſufficient to render God the Object of our Love, though We were that of his Averſion. For (as the Perſians ador'd the Sun even when it ſcorch'd them) we eſteem our ſelves oblig'd to love and honour our Parents in ſpight of their being wicked and unkind, though they be but God's Inſtruments in our Production, and made us what we were Born, not Arbitrarily, but in virtue of his Ordination. But God, to confer on us, in the moſt excellent and endearing manner, the bleſſing promiſ'd to his antient People, when he vouchſafed to aſſure them, that *he would love them freely*, was pleaſed to love us, not onely when we were Not at all, but when we were his Enemies; *If when we were enemies* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*, &c. Our Inexiſtence indeed was a Condition, wherein nothing in us was capable of being a Motive of God's Love: But our Enmity proceeded further, and made us worthy of

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Hoſ. 14. 4.

Rom. 5. 10.

his

his Deteſtation; as if his Love were nothing unleſſe it Vanquiſh'd Obſtacles, as well as Wanted Motives. This gave the Apoſtle a juſt cauſe to ſay, that *God Commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us.* That is, when we wanted all Motives to invite his Love, unleſſe our very Want of them ſhould paſs for one. And how did God expreſſe his Love unto us? Even by the Gift of the Son of his love; *For God ſo loved the world,* (ſays the divine Token of his Love) *that he gave his only begotten Son.* And how did that Son Love it? *He* (ſays the Apoſtle) *being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men. And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs.* That is, That he would love at no leſſe Rate than Death; and from the ſupereminent heighth of Glory, ſtoop'd and abaſ'd himſelf to the ſufferance of the extremeſt of Indignities, and Sunk himſelf to the bottom of Abjectedneſſe, to exalt our condition to the contrary Extreme. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed,* ſays the Prophet. *For ye know the*

Rom. 5. 8.

Joh. 3. 16

Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Iſa. 53. 5.

grace

2 Cor. 8. 9. *grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich,* says the Apostle. Men having displeased God, and consequently forfeited all Right and Natural Possibility to Happiness; even whilst they compleated the Forlornness of their condition, by the *Lethargy* of not being sensible of it, and were as Careless to Seek means of Recovery, as they had been Unable to *Devise* them of themselves: Even then, his restless *Love* would never be at quiet, till it had set his Omniscience on work, to contrive Expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his Justice and his Mercy, in reconciling Sinners to Himself. And this merciful Design, by the Incarnation of his Son, he prosecuted in a way so Worthy of Himself, and so Advantagious to Us, that our just wonder at it may keep us from having any, to find that, as St. *Peter* informs us, the very Angels (prompted, questionless, by a Religious Curiosi-

1 Pet. 1. 12. ty) ardently *desire to look into* those Divine Mysteries. I find it hotly disputed amongst Divines, (not onely betwixt the Socinians and the Orthodox, but betwixt Orthodox and Orthodox) Whether or no God could, without violating his Justice, have devised any other Course for the Expiation of Sin, than the Passion and Death

of

of Chriſt. But, without venturing to Determine, whether or no God Could, to Redeem us, have choſen any Other way; We may ſafely think, that he Has choſen the moſt Obliging and moſt Endearing way; diſplaying in this Divine Manner of Reſcuing us, the ſevereſt Juſtice, and the higheſt Mercy; the greateſt Hatred of Sin, and the greateſt Love to Sinners: Since by thoſe unequall'd and unvaluable Sufferings, to which he delivered up for us that Son, who is ſo near unto him, that he truly ſaid, *I and the Father are one*, He at once manifeſted both how much he Hated Sin, which he ſo heavily puniſh'd in the Perſon he moſt Lov'd; (though that Surety but Adopted it, to free Men from the Inſupportable vengeance of it) and How much he Lov'd Sinners, by giving up what he ſo Lov'd for a Ranſome of thoſe that were guilty of what he ſo Hated. And therefore our Saviour, though he did ſuch great things to ſatisfie the unbelieving and contumacious Jews of his being their promis'd *Meſſiah*, would not Decline Death to convince them; And, though he had not ſeldom done ſo much to make himſelf the Object of their Faith, would not be invited from the Croſs, though the chief Prieſts and Scribes themſelves ſaid at his Crucifixion, *Let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe*

Joh. 10. 30.

Mat. 27. 42.

lieve on him. And Christ, to convince the World of their unableneſſe to emerge and recover out of that deep Abyſs, wherein the Load of ſin (which in Scripture is call'd
Heb. 12. 1. *a weight*) had Precipated fall'n Man, came not into the World until well nigh 4000. years of Sickneſs had made the Diſeaſe Deſperate, and the Cure almoſt Hopeleſſe. So inveterate an obſtinacy at once widening the Diſtance betwixt God and Man, and proclaiming the laters Diſability to find by his own wiſdome, Expedients of Reunion.
Mat. 9. 32. Thus Christ heal'd and diſpoſſeſs'd a Dumb perſon, who was able to make entreaties but by the Diſability of pronouncing them; and might truly ſay to the ſecure World, *I am*
Iſa. 65. 1. *found of them that ſought me not.* And when our Saviour was come into the wretched World, of all the numerous Miracles recorded in the Goſpel, he ſcarce did any for his own private Relief. And to ſhew, that as he endured his Sorrows for our ſakes,
Iſa. 53. 5. that *by his ſtrip's* we might *be healed*; ſo were the Joys he taſted in Relation to Us. We read not (which is highly obſervable) in the whole Goſpel, that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Diſciples inform'd him, that they had Vic-
Luk. 10. toriouſly *chaſ'd Devils* and *Diſeaſes* out of *oppreſſed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* men had been *diſpoſſeſ'd* of both the Tempter

ter and Puniſhment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well atteſting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and, to teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above thoſe Creatures that Man makes his Idols, he often altered and ſuſpended the Courſe of Nature, for Man's Inſtruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws eſtabliſh'd in the Univerſe, to engage Men to obey thoſe of God, by doing Miracles ſo numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almoſt counted One. Yet were thoſe wonders wrought for a Generation that aſcrib'd them to the Devil, and Return'd them with ſo unexemplifi'd an Ingratitude, that 'tis not the leaſt of his wonders, that he would vouchſafe to work Any of them for ſuch blaſphemous wretches: Who were indeed, as ſome of the Later Jews have too truly ſtyl'd Themſelves, in relation to their Fathers, *Chometz ben ya-yin*, Vinegar the Child of Wine, a moſt degenerate Offſpring of holy Progenitors. He ſuffered ſo much for them, that made him do ſo, that he ſuffered the Addition of Miſery of being thought to ſuffer Deſervedly; *And he was numbred with the Tranſgreſſors.* And though he Liv'd as much a Miracle as any He Did, yet did his Condition ſometimes appear ſo Deſpicable and Forlorn, that men

Mat. 12. 24.

Mat. 3. 12

Iſai. 53. 12.

could not know his Deity but by his Goodneſſe, which was too Infinite not to belong Incommunicably to God. And though 'twere once a ſaying of our Saviours, *Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his Friends*; yet is not, what is ſaid of the Love here mention'd, to be underſtood of Love Indefinitely, or generally conſidered, but only of the ſingle Acts or Expreſſions of a man's love to his friends Compar'd betwixt themſelves. And ſo the alleg'd paſſage ſeems to mean but this, That among the ſingle Acts of kindneſſe to a man's friends, there is not any One more highly expreſſive of a real and ſincere Love, than to part with ones Life for their ſakes. This Text therefore would not be Indefinitely applied to the affection of Love it ſelf, as if it could not poſſibly be Greater than is requiſite to make a man Content or Willing to dye for his friends; for he that ſacrifices beſides his Life, his Fortune alſo, his Children, and his Reputation, does thereby expreſs more love to them than he could do by parting with his Life only for them. And he that is forward to *Dye* for thoſe that Hate him, or, at leaſt, know him not, diſcloſes a more plentiful and exuberant ſtock of Love, than he that does the ſame Kindneſs but for thoſe that Love him. And thus our Saviour would be underſtood,

Joh. 15 13.

derſtood, unleſſe we would ſay, that he Out-practis'd what he Taught; for, he came to lay down his Life even for his Enemies, and (like the kind Balſom-Tree, whoſe healing-wounds weep Soveraign Balm to cure thoſe that made them) he refus'd not to Dye for thoſe that Kill'd him, and ſhed his Blood for ſome of them that Spilt it. And ſo little was his injur'd Love to the ungrateful World diſcourag'd or impair'd by the ſavage Entertainment he met with in it, that, after he had ſuffer'd from wretched men (for whoſe ſakes he left Heaven to become capable of ſuffering) ſuch barbarous Indignities, as might have made bare Puniſhmenes appear Mercy, and even Cruelty it ſelf ſeem no more than Juſtice; when I ſay, to hope for ſo much as his Pardon were Preſumption; he was pleas'd to Create Confidence of no leſſe than his Love, a Virtue. Nor think it, *Lindamor*, impertinent to our preſent Theme, that I inſiſt ſo much on what Chriſt has *Done* aud Suffer'd for us, ſince both he himſelf informs us, that *He and his Father are one:* And ſome of the Texts already mention'd have taught us, that 'twas an effect of God's love alſo to the World, that *He gave his only begotten Son to redeem it*; and, That *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt* Joh. 10 30 *See alſo* Joh. 14. v. 9, 10, 11. Joh. 3. 16 Rom. 5. 8

dyed for us. Wherefore I ſhall without Scruple proceed to obſerve to you, That ſo free is Chriſts dilection, that the grand condition of our Felicity is our Belief, that he is diſpoſed to make us Happy; on Tearms, not only ſo Honorable to him, but ſo Advantagious to us, that, I was about to ſay, That poſſibly Faith it ſelf would ſcarce be exacted as requiſite to our Happineſs, but that the Condition does encreaſe the Benefit, by vouchſafing us bold and early Anticipations of it: For, *Faith* being (as
Heb. 11. 1 the Apoſtle tearms it) *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and evidence* (or conviction) *of things not ſeen,* wafts our Joys to this ſide of the Grave, bows Heaven down to us, till our freed Spirits can ſoar up to Heaven; and does us ſuch a ſervice, as the Jewiſh Spies did to their Country-men, by bring-
Numb. 13. 23, 27 ing them over to This ſide *Jordan* into the Wilderneſſe, ſome of the pleaſant and Delicious Fruits of the bleſt Land of Promiſe. I ſaid, *Lindamor*, that Faith was the grand Condition required in Gods free grant of Eternal Life. Not that I would aſcribe any thing to a Lazy, Speculative, and Barren Faith, in oppoſition to that lively and Active one, which is called by
Gal. 5. 6. the Apoſtle, πίστις δι' ἀγάπης ἐνεργουμένη, *Faith ope-*
Jam. 2. 26. *rating by Love*; ſince I am informed by St. *James*, that the Divorce of Faith and Works

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is as *Deſtructive* to Religion, as that of Soul and Body is to Life: But that I was willing to mind you, that though true Faith (which cries like *Rachel*, *Give me children or elſe I die*) be ever the pregnant Mother of good Works, yet are not thoſe Works the Cauſe, but the Effects and Signs of Gods firſt Love to Men, (however afterward the Children may Nurſe their Parents.) As, though the Needle's pointing at the Poles be, by being an Effect, an Argument of its having been Invigorated by the Loadſtone, or received Influence from ſome other Magnetick Body; yet is not that Reſpect unto the North the Cauſe, but the Operation of the Iron's being drawn by the attractive Mineral. *Thou art good and doſt good*, ſays the Pſalmiſt to his Maker. The greatneſſe of his Goodneſſe is that which makes it Ours; nor doth He do us good, becauſe that We are good, but becauſe He is liberally ſo; as the Sun ſhines on Dunghils, not out of any Invitation his Beams find there, but becauſe it is his Nature to be diffuſive of his Light. Yet with this difference, that whereas the Sun's Bounty, by being rather an Advantage to us than a Favour, deſerves our Joy, and not our Thanks, becauſe his Viſits are made Deſignleſly, and without any particular Intention of addreſſe, (by ſuch a bare

Gen. 30.

Pſal. 119. 68.

neceſſity of Nature, as that which makes Springs flow out into Streams, when their Beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth inceſſantly ſwel the exuberant Sources;) God on the contrary, for being neceſſarily kind, is not leſſe Freely or Obligingly ſo, to You or Me; for, though ſome kind of Communicativeneſs be Eſſential to his Goodneſſe, yet his Extenſion of it without Himſelf, and his Vouchſafing it to this or that particular Perſon, are purely Arbitrary. To omit his Love to the numberleſſe Elect Angels; the ſtrict Relations betwixt the Perſons of the Bleſſed Trinity, ſupplying God with Internal Objects, which imploy'd his Kindneſſe before the Creation, and Himſelf being able to allow his Goodneſſe the Extent of Infinity for its Diffuſion. But (having glanc'd at this onely by the By) we may yet further admiringly obſerve, That whereas Men uſually give freelieſt where they have not given before, and make it both the Motive and the Excuſe of their deſiſtance from giving any more, That they have given already: Gods bounty hath a very different Method; for he uſes to give, becauſe he Hath given, and, that he May give. Conſonantly to which, when the revolting *Iſraelites* had broken the Contents, whilſt *Moſes* was bringing them the Tables of the LAW, and had thereby provok'd the Incen-

Incenſed Giver of it to the thoughts of a ſuddain Extirpation of ſo Ingratefull and Rebellious a People; we may obſerve, that, whereas God, as unwilling to remember his former Goodneſſe to them, ſpeaking to *Moſes*, calls them, *Thy People which thou broughteſt out of the Land of Ægypt*: *Moſes*, on the other ſide, to engage God to the New mercy of a Pardon, repreſents to God his Former mercy to them, and calls them *God's People*, which *He brought forth out of the Land of Ægypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand.* And ſo conſpicuous in the Eternal Son was this property of the Merciſull Father, that when ſick *Lazarus*'s Siſters implored his Reſcue for their exſpiring Brother, the Motive they employ, and which Proſper'd their addreſſes, was, *Lord, behold,* (not, he who loveth thee, but) *he whom thou loveſt, is ſick.* And as he takes the firſt Inducements of his Bounty from Himſelf; ſo do his former Favours both invite and give Rates to his ſucceeding Bleſſings. And there is reaſon for it: For his pure Love being all the Merit, by which Man can pretend to the Effects of his Bounty; it is but juſt, that the Degree of his Love ſhould Proportion thoſe Favours, which 'tis our only Title to; and that God's

Exod. 32. 7. verſ. 11. Joh. 11. 3.

God's Liberality ſhould as well afford Meaſures, as Motives to it ſelf.

Sect. 14. Nor is God's love leſſe Diſ-intereſs'd than Free. His grand Deſign upon us is but to make us Inſtruments and Partakers of His Glory, and to bring us to everlaſting Happineſſe, by a Way that does as well elevate and dignifie our Nature; as the Condition reſerv'd for us will. His Method of ſaving us, if but compli'd with, does here, as
Col. 1. 12 the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; We being made (as
2 Pet. 1. 4 St *Peter* ſpeaks) *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcap'd the corruption that is in the world through Luſt.* So that thoſe things, wherein the nobleſt of the Philoſophers plac'd their Felicity, ſerve but to Qualifie and Prepare Chriſtians for that Higher Bleſſedneſs that is reſerv'd by God for thoſe that love him; and cannot but be heightned and endear'd by the Value, which Graces and Virtues had given men on Earth, for ſuch a Noble and Rational kind of Happineſſe, as is apportion'd to them in Heaven. What ends can he have upon us, whoſe Goodneſſe and Bleſſedneſſe are both Infinite? He was unconceivably Happy (in his own Self-ſufficiency) before the Creatures had a Being; and ſure that Felicity that

that needed not Themſelves to be ſupreme, needs nothing that they can do. Nor was it his Indigence that forc'd him to make the World, thereby to make new Acquiſitions, but his Goodneſſe, that preſs'd him to Manifeſt, and to Impart his Glory; and the Goods which he ſo overflowingly abounds with. Witneſſe his Suſpenſion of the World's Creation, which certainly had had an earlier Date, were the Deity capable of Want, and the Creatures of Supplying it. St. *Paul* in his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, ſtyles God, Μακάριος, which we tranſlate, *The bleſſed God*, but may perhaps more properly be rendred, *The happy God*: And elſewhere in the ſame Epiſtle he truly calls him *The Happy*, as well as *Only Potentate*. *God* (ſays the Apoſtle) *that made the World, and all Things therein, ſeeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not*, &c. *As though He needed any thing, ſeeing that He giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all Things.* And, *In Him, we live, and move, and have our Being.* And indeed, ſo coherent in the mind of a meer Man, that does but Conſider and Underſtand the Import of his own Notions, is the belief of God's happineſſe to that of His Being, that I remember the Epicurean, *Lucretius* himſelf,

— *Quid enim immortalibus atque beatis Gratia noſtra queat largirier Emolumcatis, Ut noſtri quidquam cauſa gerere aggrederentur?* Lucret. ex Epic.

1 Tim. 1. 11. 1 Tim. 6. 15. Act. 27. 24. 25, & 26.

ſelf, even in that impious paſſage, where he denies Divine Providence; and in a ſeeming, but injurious Complement, would, under the pretence of Eaſing God of it, Deprive Him of the Government of the World; does yet confeſſe, that the Divine Nature muſt neceſſarily enjoy a Supreme and endleſſe Tranquility adding, (to bring this to our preſent purpoſe) that 'tis

——*Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;*
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri.

Whereby he acknowledges,

That from all griefs and dangers of them freed,
Rich in it ſelf, it has of us no need.

Or, if you will have him ſpeak of the gods in the Plural, like a Heathen Poet, that

Far above griefs and danger, thoſe bleſt Powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of ours.

A much Nobler Poet tells us, That *the* Pſal. 24. 1 *Earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein.*

Agree-

Agreeably whereunto, that *Great God that formed all things,* (as in our Tranſlation the Scripture calls him) ſays in one of the Pſalms, *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee, for the World is mine, and the fulneſs thereof.* His Ubiquity excludes all wiſhes of Remove, by making his Eſſence uncapable of Excluſion; for, Whither ſhould he deſire to tranſport Himſelf that is Every where, and can wiſh himſelf in no place where he is not already? His ſufficiency is ſuch, that he can ſee no Goods, but what he Gives, or Hath, (or rather both beſtows and poſſeſſes) his Plenty being ſo unexhauſted a Spring of Goods, that his Liberality does leſſe impoveriſh God, than the Sun's light does him; or imparted Knowledge impairs the Teacher's Stock. And therefore, though St. *James* do very juſtly call God, *The Father of Lights,* who is the beſtower of every good and every perfect Gift; yet the *Friend of God,* (as the Scripture calls *Abraham*) and that Royal Prieſt, (whom the Writer to the Hebrews teaches us to have been ſo Illuſtrious a Type of Him, whom he calls, *The high Prieſt of our Profeſſion*) do both of them in the ſame Chapter ſtyle him, *The Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* No, no, God needs not beg From, or covet In the Creatures ſhallow ſtreams, thoſe goods, of which he not only Hath, but is the Source. Our greateſt Ser-

Prov. 26. 10.
Pſal. 50. 12.
Jam. 1. 17
Jam. 2. 23.
Heb. 7. *per totum.*
Heb. 3. 1.
Gen. 14. 18. 22.

vices

vices to our Creator muſt be to Diſcharge our ſelves, not to Advantage him, nor as thinking to add any thing to a Felicity, which were not Infinite, could it admit Encreaſe. Our higheſt Performances, though they be Dues, amount not unto Tributes, but are rather like thoſe Pepper-corns of Rent which Free-holders pay, not with hope or with intent to Enrich their Land-lord, but to Acknowledge, that they hold all from him. When we admire the Sun, our Seeing of his light doth not increaſe it, it makes it not Greater, but onely it makes it Ours; and when we turn away, or ſhut our Eyes, that glorious Planet ſuffers no Eclipſe, and is not at all darkned or impair'd, nor doth He thereby loſe his light, but We: The Eaſineſſe of the application requires, and excuſes its Omiſſion. *If thou ſinneſt, (ſays Elihu in Job) what doſt thou againſt him? if thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedneſs may hurt a Man, as thou art, and thy righteouſneſs may profit the Son of Man.* In effect, the wicked's ſpite againſt God is but like a mad-man's running his head againſt the wall, that leaves the Wall unſhaken, but daſhes his own Brains out. God *inhabits* a Felicity (as well as *Light*) *inacceſſible* to all inferiour attempts: His ſoveraign Tranquility is ſo ſublimely plac'd, that

Job 35. 6, 7, 8.

1 Tim. 6. 16.

that 'tis above the reach of all Diſquieting Impreſſions; and, like the Stars, that feel not the Diſeaſes their inauſpicious Influence produces, He doth not Reſent the torments he Inflicts. God's Juſtice is not leſſe Eſſential to him than his Mercy; Witneſſe that (the numbers of the Saints and the Reprobate conſider'd) thouſands fall Sacrifices to the ſeverer Attribute, for one that proves Capable of the milder. He ſaid, *He would get himſelf honour upon Pharaoh and all his Hoſt*, when he deſign'd their ruine in the *Red-Sea*: And *Moſes* ſaid, *He hath triumphed glorioufly* in effecting it. And in *Exekiel* he ſays, *Behold I am againſt thee, O Sidon, and I will be glorifi'd in the midſt of thee, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall have executed my judgements in her, and ſhall be ſanctifi'd in her.* Thus, when a Flaſh of God's Indignation (kindled by that *ſtrange fire* they preſum'd to offer before him) had blaſted the two preſumptuous Sons of *Aaron*, God is ſaid *to have been ſanctifi'd in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorifi'd before all the people*; ſuch eminent and examplary Inſtances of Severity, manifeſting him to be ſo Holy in his Laws, and ſo Concern'd for them, that even the Miniſters of his Altars ſhall not violate them with Impunity, but find Him (what the Writer to the *Hebrews* calls him) *A conſum-*

Exod. 14. 17, 18.

Exod. 15. 1.

Ezek. 28 22.

Lev. 10. 3.

Heb. 12. 29. *consuming fire*; Who will be Glorifi'd before all his people, either by the Obedience of those that approach Him, or by their Destruction. So to Evidence, that God can derive Satisfaction as well from the Exercise of provoked Justice, as from that of his provoked Mercy; the sacred Orator uses this remarkable *Antanaclasis*, *And it shall come* Deut. 18. 63. *to passe, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you; so will the Lord rejoyce over you to destroy you, & bring you to naught.* Thus, though it be truly said of God Lam. 3. 33. by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: (and therefore the determined Consumption of the whole Land, which our Bibles English, *God's work*, *his strange work*, other Isa. 28. 21. Translators read, *Opus alienum suum*) Yet when the sins of Incorrigible offenders are grown to that provoking Heighth, that his Mercy interceeds no more to avert or suspend the inflictions of his Justice; then how much he can satisfie himself in Destroying those that Would not be Preserved, may be ghess'd at by that formidable Expression in *Ezekiel*; where, having fore-told what havock the Sword, the Famine, and the Pestilence should make amongst the intractable and disperst *Israelites*, he adds, (as a kind Ezek. 13. 5. of Ἐπιτίμιον) *Thus shall mine anger be accomplished, and I will cause my fury to rest upon them*

them, and I will be comforted. The Howlings of the Damned as well ſound forth his Praiſes, as do the Hallelujahs of the Saints; they both do ſing to him an everlaſting Canticle of praiſe; onely in this great Conſort of his whole Intelligent Creation, the deſignleſly conſpiring Voices are as differing as the Conditions of the reſpective Singers. Hell's darkneſſe doth as well contribute to God's Glory, as Heaven's Eternal Splendor: As Shadows, judiciouſly plac'd, do no leſſe praiſe the Painter, than do the livelier and brighter Colours. And as when the Earth doth ſend black, noiſome, and ſulphureous Exhalations up toward the Sky, alas, they reach not Heaven, nor diſcompoſe the Spheres; but all the Storms and Thunders they produce fall on that Globe they came from, and there do all their miſchief: So, the wicked may Wrong God indeed, yet do they really Harm but themſelvs by all their greateſt ſins, which trouble Him chiefly, but becauſe they neceſſitate Him to puniſh them: for the tranſgreſſions that do moſt Provoke God do him not the leaſt Harm. An impious perſon may (as *Elihu* lately inform'd us) hurt a Man, as himſelf is, not that ſupremely bleſſed Deity; the Reſult of whoſe Infinite Perfections is a reſembling Happineſſe, which is as inſeparable from Him as his Eſſence. Our offen-

ces may derogate from his Acceſſional Glory, not from his Eſſential Felicity; or rather, the moſt deſperate Sinners by their greateſt Crimes, can but Change the Attribute they ſhould bring honour to, and but oppoſe the glorifying of his Goodneſſe, to occaſion the glorifying of his Juſtice; ſince he will be infallibly glorifi'd, ſoon or late, either by Men's actions, or their ſufferings; by their Practice of Duties, or Puniſhment for Sin. Thus you ſee how little God is beholden to you for your Declining Hell: Nor will the ſcore be very much encreaſ'd by your Addreſſes and Attempts for Heaven. *Can a man* (ſays *Eliphaz*) *be profitable unto God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable unto himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain unto him that thou makeſt thy ways perfect?* Congruouſly to which ſence the Pſalmiſt ſays, *My Goodneſs extendeth not to Thee*; The fire that we kindle on God's Altars heats and enlightens Us, but warms not Heaven at ſo diſtant a remove, nor is wanted in the Sun's reſidence. We have all the Redolence of the Perfumes and Incenſe we burn upon his Altars, the Smoak doth vaniſh e'r it can reach the Sky, and whilſt 'tis undiſperſt, but Clouds, and but Obſcures it. Alas, our Beſt Performances are uſeleſſe Services to God, as the Heir's bringing Wax to his depart-

Job 22. 2, 3.

Pſal. 16. 2.

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ing Father is to him, which adds not any thing to the Rich man's ſtore, and is by him deſir'd and accepted, onely to Seal away a Fortune to his Son. Though therefore it be true, that God is Pleaſ'd with our Performances, yet is that Welcome he vouchſafes to give them, ſo far from enabling us by them to Requite his Love, that it encreaſes the Unrequitedneſſe of it; Since He is delighted with them, as they afford him juſt Riſes to reward them. How far from Mercenary is then God's Bounty! ſince he accepts our Acknowledgments of his former bleſſings, (chiefly) to make them Opportunities of conferring freſh ones; as good old *Iſaac* deſir'd his Son's Veniſon, Gen. 27. 4. that from the Reliſhing of that ſavoury Meat he might take an Opportunity to bleſſe him.

And the better to diſcover how Diſintereſſ'd God's favours are, let us further conſider, how little they are Requitable; for we can give him nothing but his own, (nor, Heaven knows, all that neither;) and both the Will and Power to ſerve Him are His, upon ſo juſt and many Scores, that we are unable to Retribute, unleſſe we do Reſtore; and all the Duties we can pay our Maker, are leſſe properly Requitals than Reſtitutions. When *David* and his Officers had offer'd towards the Structure of that Magni- *Sect.* 15.

ficent Temple, which they ſeem'd Ambitious to make a Manſion inferior to Heaven onely; the King himſelf gave three thouſand Talents of Gold, and ſeven of refin'd Silver; and the Heads of the People, five thouſand Talents (beſides ten thouſand Drachms) of Gold, ten thouſand Talents of Silver, eighteen thouſand of Braſs, and a hundred thouſand of Iron, (a Treaſure, of which I ſcarce remember to have read the like in any Hiſtory) beſides a number of all manner of Precious Stones, capable of impoveriſhing the very *Indies*: They perfum'd this noble and unequall'd Offering with a ſolemn Confeſſion, which perhaps in God's eſteem was much more precious than it: *Thine, O Lord,* (ſays the Royal Prophet in the name of all) *is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious Name. But who am I? and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are Strangers before thee, and Sojour-*

1 Chron. 29.11.16

Sojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our days on Earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding. O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee an Houſe, for thy holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. Who (ſays the Apoſtle, in a Queſtion that imports its own Negative) *hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.* Nay, even our Love it ſelf (that poor Man's Surety and Exchequer, that doth pay all his Debts, by ſupplying him with the Prerogative to Coin his Deſires and Wiſhes of an Arbitrary value) is here unable to diſcharge our Debts: our Love being too much the Effect, to be capable of being the Recompence of God's. And ſurely, the Divine Amoriſt had cauſe to ſay, that *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And, as the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere ſpeaks, *We love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* If, in effect, we look upon the unworthy Conteſt, betwixt God's Mercies, and moſt Men's Ingratitude, and but reflect upon the ſmall Return of Love that the greateſt Diſburſements of His do uſually bring home; we cannot but acknowledge, (as *David* in the lately mention'd Scripture did) that our Loving God for his Favours, is one of the greateſt Favours that we love him for. So Unrequitable is God's Love, and ſo

Rom. 11. 35, 36.

1 Joh. 4. 10.

1 Joh. 4. 19.

Insolvent are We, that that Love vastly improves the Benefit, by which alone we might have pretended to some ability of Retribution. And so unlimited is this Impotence of ours to recompence or repay God's Dilection, that it extends to, and fetters our very Wishes. For God enjoys an Affluence of Felicity, so perfect and entire, that even our Wishes can aim at nothing for him Worthy of him, unless instructed by what he already actually possesses. And the Sense of this same very Impotence, to some of the greatest Proficients in *Seraphick Love*, appears not the least uneasie Property of it. It grieves us sensibly, to see our selves reduc'd to be onely Passive, and the Receivers in this Commerce. We would fain contribute something, and cannot always refrain from devoting our Wishes to encrease his Happiness, to whom we owe all ours. And some holy Persons (particularly St. *Austin*) have by the Exuberance of their Gratitude and Devotion, been transported to make Wishes, and use Expressions, wherein their Affections had a greater share than their Reason, and which argued them much better to apprehend, How much God deserv'd of them, than How little he needed them. But, upon second Thoughts, we shall find, that the Cause of our Grief ought to turn it into our Joy, since the Desires we would frame, aiming

ing at God's being infinitely happy, are all Fulfilled before they are Conceived, and that in the moſt Advantagious and Nobleſt way: For, could God's happineſſe admit Acceſſion by our accompliſh'd Wiſhes, there were then a poſſibility of his Wanting ſomething to render it Compleat. And ſure, 'tis a more Supreme felicity to be by Nature tranſcendently above All encreaſe of Bleſſedneſſe, than to receive the Greateſt that Men can Wiſh.

To proceed now to the Conſtancy of God's Love: We cannot entertain of God any Apprehenſions, not altogether Unworthy of him, and criminally Injurious to him, without believing, That to think that he can be Inconſtant, is as great a Crime as 'twere a Miſery to find him ſo. His Love is like his Eſſence, immutably Eternal, reaching from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, it preceeded the Nativity of Time, and will ſurvive its utmoſt Period and Obſequies. *Sect.* 16.

Having loved his own which were in the World, he loved them unto the end, ſays the Evangeliſt: And when St. *James* had told us, That *every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights,* he adds, (to complete our Conſolation) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. Of his own Will begat he us of the word of truth.* And, in effect, Joh. 13. 1 Jam. 1. 17

fect, ſince God takes the Motives of his Love to Us, from Himſelf, not from us, the Unchangeableneſſe of His Nature ſeems ſtrongly to infer that of his Charity, and our Happineſſe in it. For, *I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not conſumed*, ſays God by the laſt of his Prophets: And in *Jeremiah* he tells his people, *I have lov'd thee with an everlaſting love.* And what God once ſaid to the generous *Joſhua*, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, is by the Writer to the *Hebrews* appli'd to Believers in general: for *the gifts and calling of God* (ſays the ſame Author elſewhere) *are without repentance.* Nor do thoſe Croſſes that ſeem due to his Anger deſtroy the Immutability of his Love, ſince even that Anger is an Effect of it, proceeding from a Fatherly Impatience of ſeeing a Spot unwip'd off in the Face he loves too well to ſee a Blemiſh in it; and from his Deſire to ſee his Child an Object fit for a larger Meaſure of his Kindneſſe: As when we beat the Duſt out of a Suit we fancy, we ſtrike not out of Anger, but onely to remove that which doth Sully it, and hinder us to take that Delight in it, which our fondneſſe would be pleaſed with a juſt Cauſe to find. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten*, (ſays our Saviour.) And, *I know, O Lord*, (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *that thy Judgments*

Mal. 3. 6

Joſh. 1. 5.

Heb. 13. 5
Rom. 11. 29.

Rev. 3. 19
Pſal. 119 75.

Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me. The Furnace of Affliction being meant but to refine us from our Earthly droſſineſſe, and Soften us for the Impreſſion of God's own Stamp and Image. The great and merciful Architect of his Church, (whom not onely the Philoſophers have ſtyl'd, but the Scripture it ſelf calls τεχνίτης, an Artiſt or Artificer) employs not on us the Hammer and the Chizzel, with an intent to Wound or Mangle us, but only to Square and Faſhion our hard and ſtubborn Hearts into ſuch *living Stones*, as may both Grace and Strengthen his heavenly Structure. Nor is God onely thus Conſtant to his Love, but to his Lovelineſſe. Our Female Beauties are uſually as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, and more certainly in the former; becauſe, though Caſualities ſhould ſpare them, Age brings in a Neceſſity of a Change, nay, a Decay; leaving our Doters upon Red and White inceſſantly perplex'd, by the incertainty both of the Continuance of their Miſtreſs's Kindneſſe, and of the Laſting of her Beauty, (both which are neceſſary to the *Amoriſt's* Joys and Quiet) for, ſometimes, when the Miſtreſs's humour doth not change ſo Much, as to prove guilty of the fault of Inconſtancy, her Face alters enough to make her Lovers wiſh Inconſtancy no Fault;

Heb. 11 10

1 Pet. 2. 5

Fault; or, that ſhe had committed it, that her Fickleneſſe might afford them the excuſe of Imitation or Revenge. But, in Devotion, we are equally ſecure from both theſe Dangers. Since God doth not deſiſt from bleſſing us with His Love, nor ceaſes ever from deſerving the Heighth of Ours. Nor is he onely conſtant in making us the Objects of his Love, but alſo in bending and enclining us to make him the Object of our ſtrongeſt Affections; ſo that he not onely perſiſts in continuing to us both the Offer and the Value of his Love, but perſeveres to give us a receptive *Diſpoſition* to Welcome it to us, and reflect it up to him. The want of ſuch a Diſpoſition loſt *Adam* Paradiſe, and the Fall'n Angels Heaven; there being to the Object that muſt ſecure our Love ſuch a Nature requiſite in reference to our Affections, as Philoſophers are pleaſ'd to aſcribe to the world's Centre in relation to Heavy Bodies, which, they teach us, that Magnetick Point has the double Faculty, not onely to Draw thither, but to Keep there. For ſo Un-toward and Croſſe-grain'd are We, in point of our own Good, and ſo unfit to Procure, and ready to Deſert, our own Felicity, that neither its Excellency is a ſufficient Motive to carry our addreſſes to it, nor its Poſſeſſion a competent Tye to intercept in us all deſigns of Re-

Revolts and Divorces: But we muſt be uſed as peeviſh Children are, who, (on the one ſide) when their Mouths are out of taſte, and they refuſe to take what is neceſſary for them, muſt have it not only Offer'd them, but Forc'd upon them, and be (as it were) Made to receive it; and who (on the other ſide) muſt be reſtrain'd from Gadding, when the Beauty of the Manſions they live in cannot invite their Stay; but they would gladly leave the proudeſt Palaces Architecture can boaſt, to run into the Street, and Dabble in the Kennel. All theſe three Properties of Divine Conſtancy are not ill Shadow'd in the operations of the Load-ſtone, (a Mineral, in which I have made too many Experiments, not to be by you allow'd to make ſome Compariſons to it.) For, firſt, it never forſakes its Inclinations for the Steel: next, being united to it, it retains ſo conſtantly its Attractive Qualities, that it gives not the Needle any Motive of deſerting it; and thirdly, it doth never rightly touch the amorous Steel, without leaving an Impreſſion, which ever after diſpoſes it to a Converſion to that Magnetick Poſture, which beſt fits it to receive freſh Influences. To which, let me add this other Reſemblance, betwixt God's work on Us, and the Load-ſtone's on the Iron, that the Kind Stone attracts a Needle

Needle to it, not to Advantage it ſelf by that Union, but to Impart its Virtue to what it draws. Beſides, Abſence and Rivals, thoſe frequent Ruiners of other Lovers happineſs, can threaten nothing of Formidable to Yours. For, Abſence (which ſo divorces us from that which animates us, that Lovers do not ſo improperly ſtyle it Death, if Death be but the Separation of Soul and Body) by God's Ubiquity we are ſecured from; He is ever preſent With Us, or rather In Us. You that long ſince ſo highly valu'd the Opportunities of Converſing with your Miſtreſſe for ſome few Moments, ſhall here find your Privileges improv'd to a Permiſſion, nay, an Invitation, of entertaining the Object of your Love at all times. No hour renders your viſits Unſeaſonable, nor no length Tedious: He is rather welcomeſt to God that comes to him Oftneſt, and ſtays with him Longeſt. What favours were vouchſaf'd to that antient Propheteſs, (who was likewiſe one of the firſt Evangeliſts) who for many years *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers Night and Day*, the beginning of St. *Luke's* Goſpel may inform you. The *midnight Hymns* of *Paul* and *Silas* did not onely not Diſturb or Offend him they praiſ'd, but procur'd the viſit of an Angel to bring them miraculous and unexpected Liberty,

Luk. 2. 37, &c.

Act. 6, 25 26, &c.

Liberty, as a proof of the Acceptableneſſe of their ſeemingly unſeaſonable Devotions. When *Enoch had walked with God* as many years as the year has days, God was ſo far from being Importun'd or Tir'd by that laſting Aſſiduity, that vouchſafing him an unexampled Exemption from Death, he was pleaſ'd by a new and a nearer Cut to Heaven, to admit him to a yet Cloſer, more Immediate, and more Undiſtracted Communion with himſelf. And when *Moſes* had ſpent no leſs than *forty days and forty nights* in Converſing (if I may uſe ſo Familiar a tearm) with God in the Mount, he brought down thence, inſtead of a Penance for his Importunity, ſo ſignal and radiant a Teſtimony of God's peculiar Favour, that his dazled Country-men were as much Diſabled, as Invited, to gaze on an Object of ſo much Wonder. And then, How proud do we ſee many Lovers of their Sufferings, when ſhe but Knows of them for whom they are endured? But in *Seraphick Love*, there is not the leaſt good Wiſh, or privateſt Suffering, nay, not a whiſpering Sigh, or cloſer Thought, that ſilently Groans or Aſpires in the amorous Soul, but he both ſees and hears, that Puts his Servants *tears in his Bottle*, Sweetning and Recompencing the greateſt Misfortunes that his Love occaſions, with ſuch Support and Joys, as hinder us to feel them,

Gen. 5. 22, 23, 24.

Exod. 34 30.

Pſal. 56. 8

them, & make them deserve a contrary name. Each amorous Soul may say to God with
Psal. 139. 2, 3. David, *Thou knowest my down-sitting, and my up-rising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off, thou compassest my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my wayes.* And Christ also himself has so attentive an Eye upon the amorous Soul, that he is held forth in the *Apocalypse*, as telling the Ru-
Rev. 2. 8, 9. ler of the Church of *Smyrna*, *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty*; And saying to the Angel of the Church of *Perga-*
ver. 12, 13 *mus*, *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is, and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithfull Martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* So that no endearing Circumstance of our Love scapes unobserv'd by him, who has Done and Suffer'd so much to engage us to it. God remembers not our Endeavours to serve Him, the lesse, for
Mat. 25. 37, &c. Our having forgotten them. *When saw we thee any way distressed, and relieved thee?* will be the Question of those to whom Heaven it self will be at the last Day awarded, as having Ministred to their Redeemer. Those, that in Degenerate times, such as ours, *Lindamor*, did, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, mourn for Their Sins, that mourned not for their Own, and condol'd among themselves the

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spreading Wickedneſſe of the times they liv'd in; tho' probably the Dangers threatned them by the very Sinfulneſſe they deplor'd, made them affect ſuch Privacies in their Conferences, as freed them from the Thoughts of being Over-heard; yet the Scripture informs us, (and 'tis a Comfortable as well as Memorable Paſſage) that *the Lord hearkned, and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. Then ſhall he return, and diſcern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, between him that ſerveth God, and him that ſerveth him not.* Mal. 3. 16, 17. *I know*, ſays Chriſt, (not onely to the Angel of *Smyrna*, but to each true Sufferer for Him) *thy works, and tribulation, and poverty: Fear none of theſe things that thou ſhalt ſuffer. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* Rev. 2. 9, 10. God is often pleas'd to accept thoſe good Thoughts and Intentions of his Servants, which never arrive at actual Performances. Though *David* built not the Temple he deſign'd, yet his Son, that did it, informs us, that God ſaid unto him, *Foraſmuch as it was in thine heart to build an Houſe for my Name, Thou didſt well in that it was in thine heart, &c.* 2 Chron. 6. 8. And 'tis the Epithet our Saviour gives God, *Your Father which ſeeth in ſecret, &c.* Mat. 6. 6. Nor need we fear our Rivals

ſhould

should Supplant us, since [illegible]n have more in Devotion, whose P[illegible] Endeavour it is not, that God w[illegible]s more. For his Love to You b[illegible]e chiefeſt Merit) the ſtrongeſt Motive and Title unto theirs, they cannot but Wiſh him well whom God doth love ſo; and cannot Wiſh him better, than by imploring for him freſh Additions, both of that Love of God, and grateful Diſpoſitions to return it. Our Saviour

Luk. 15. 7, 10. aſſures us, that *there is Joy in the preſence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* And the ſole Hymn (except a Viſionary one) I find recorded of the Celeſtial

Luke 2. 13, 14. Quire, was ſung for a Bleſſing to Mankind, wherein (for ought I know) their Love and

Iſa. 9. 6. Sympathy alone concern'd them: *For unto us* (Men) *the Child is born, and unto us the Son*

Heb. 2. 16 *is given. Who took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the ſeed of Abraham.* So Noble and ſo Diſintereſſ'd doth Divine Love make Ours, that there is nothing, beſides the Object of that Love, that we love more than our Concurrents in it, perchance out of a Gratitude to their aſſiſting us, to pay a Debt (of Love and Praiſe) for which (alas!) we find our ſingle ſelves but too Inſolvent.

Sect. 17. Perhaps I need not mind you, *Lindamor*, that divers Paſſages of the fore-going Diſcourſe, ſuppoſe the Truth of their Doctrine, who aſcribe to God, in relation to every Man,

Man, an Eternal unchangeable and Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet concerning the Controverſies betwixt the *Calviniſts* and the *Arminians*, about Prædeſtination, and the coherent Doctrines, it were Improper to give you here my ſence. Thoſe that are truly Pious of either Party, are perhaps otherwiſe look'd on by God than by one another, as Contending, which of Gods Attributes ſhould be moſt Reſpected; the one ſeeming to Affirm irreſpective Decrees, to magnifie his Goodneſſe; and the other to Deny them but to Secure the credit of his Juſtice. And even in Honouring the ſame Attribute, his Goodneſſe, theſe Adverſaries ſeem Rivals, the one party ſuppoſing it beſt Celebrated by believing it ſo Irreſiſtable, that to whom ſoever 'tis intended, he Cannot but be happy; and th' other thinking it moſt Extoll'd by being believ'd ſo Univerſal, that it will make Every man happy, if he pleaſes: The one Party electing to Honour Free-grace, by aſſigning it (as to Men) an unlimitedly-vaſt Extent; as the other does, by aſcribing it an infallibly-victorious Degree. But though my haſte, and the nature of my Theme make me decline the Controverſies about Prædeſtination; yet ſince the Doctrine that maintains it, is not only by almoſt all the reſt of Mankind, but by the reſt of the Proteſtant Churches themſelves,

selves, (the *Lutherans*, and divers learn'd Divines of the Church of *England*) not only Rejected, but Detested as little lesse than Blasphemous, (as indeed they that judge it an Error, cannot but be tempted to think it a Dangerous one, and of very pernicious Consequence, so far forth as its Sequels are permitted to have Influence on Men's Practice) I think it not amiss to Advertise you, that the Doctrine of Prædestination is not necessary to Justifie the Freenesse and the Greatnesse of God's Love. For so conspicuous and Refulgent a Truth is that of God's being the Author of Man's Felicity, that the Dispute betwixt the *Calvinists* and *Arminians* is not so much concerning the Thing, as concerning the Manner of its being Proffer'd; the former affirming Grace to be Irresistably presented; the later, thogh they deny it to be Irrejectable, yet granting, not only that it is altogether Free and Undeserv'd, but also, that the Proffer is made both with a Power enabling those to whom 'tis render'd, to Accept it, and with such engaging Invitations, that Man at his first Conversion need contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the not-wilfully Refusing it, and may more properly be said to owe it unto God, than the Beggar to owe his Alms to his Reliever, though he open his hand to receive it, which he might have declin'd to do

do, if he would have wilfully courted his own Prejudice. Chriſt paid *a Ranſome to Redeem us*, 'tis true, and he is therefore call'd, *The Lord that bought us*: But it was God's free Goodneſſe, both to provide us That Chriſt, and to accept of That Ranſome, neither of which he was Oblig'd to do; and therefore, the Scripture aſcribes it not to the Juſtice, but to the Love of God to the world, that *He ſent his only begotten Son to Redeem it*: And St. *Paul* in the ſame Text tells us both, that *We are Juſtifi'd*, δωρεὰν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, *freely by his Grace*, and yet that it is, διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως, *through the Redemption*, (purchaſ'd for a Ranſome; the Original word Engliſh'd Redemption, relating to the Price paid for the Redeeming of Captives) *that is in Jeſus Chriſt*. 'Tis conſeſt on all hands, that Merit muſt be diſclaim'd, and thoſe that ſeem to expect ſomething from God as a Due, acknowledge, that if his Promiſe did not, their Actions could not, make it ſo; and that 'tis to his Mercy they owe the Right they have to confide in his Juſtice. St. *Paul*, who, having *fought the good Fight, finiſh'd his Courſe, and kept the Faith*, expected *a Crown of Righteouſneſs from the Lord*, under the Notion of the Righteous *Judge*; yet tells us, that *by Grace we are ſaved, through faith, and that not of our ſelves, it is the gift of God*. Whoſe

1 Pet. 2 1.

Joh. 3 16.

Rom. 3. 24.

2 Tim. 4. verſ. 7, 8.

Eph. 2. 8.

Promiſes now they Are made us, allow us indeed to expect Heaven from his Juſtice;
2Pet. 1. 4. but *the making us thoſe great and precious promiſes,* (as St. *Peter* juſtly ſtyles them) muſt be acknowledg'd the pure Effect of *his free and undeſerved Goodneſs*; which to believe Infinite, we need but conſider the Diſproportion betwixt ſuch a Recompence as Eternal Glory, and the leaſt Imperfect Performances of ours: Which, though they Needed not Pardon, could not at leaſt Challenge any Reward from Him, who, as our Creator, has ſuch a Right to exact of us what ſervices he Pleaſes, without propoſing us any Recompence, that our exacteſt obedience to all his Commands, would yet leave us to confeſſe our ſelves *unprofitable*
Luk. 17. 10. *Servants,* who *have done but what was our Duty to do*; and what if we had not done, we had given God, who had the Power, the Right and Provocation to puniſh us. And indeed, ſo conſcious are men Generally (if not Naturally) to their being beholding to God for their Felicity, that even thoſe that miſtake or oppoſe his Way of doing them good, will yet be ſure to find out ſome Notion or other, under which they may conceive themſelves God's Debtors for his Bleſſings. That the more ſober ſort of Romiſh Catholicks themſelves, aſcribe not ſo much to Merite, (properly

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ſo call'd) nor ſo little to God's Grace, as the more Quarrelſome Writers of their party have given the more Eager Diſputants of ours occaſion to reproach them; were perhaps no difficult task to manifeſt, if my haſte would give me leave. That the *Arminians* own the Freeneſſe and Unmeritedneſſe of God's grace, the Remonſtrants * Confeſſion and Apology are very careful to ſatisfie the World. And even the *Socinians*, (how proſperouſly I determine not) are not a little, or un-induſtriouſly ſollicitous to free their Erroneous Doctrine of Juſtification from the objected guilt of its tendency to draw the Imbracers of it to *Sacrifice to their own Nets*, and thank themſelves for their Felicity. Which brings into my mind a paſſage that I lately read in one of the chief modern Upholders of that Sect, *Schlichtingius*; who is wont in my Opinion, where his Subject will bear it, to diſcourſe as Fairly and as Rationally as almoſt any Writer that I have met with of his Perſuaſion; and who labours to reconcile *Socinus* his Doctrine with the Freeneſſe of God's Grace, by Conſiderations, which, not to Injure him, I ſhall preſent you with in his own words. ——*Ad retundendam vero* (ſays he, diſputing againſt the Learned *Meiſnerus*) *arrogantiam juſtificatorum, & ne dicant ſe meruiſſe Gratiam, non eſt neceſſe,*

* *Eſpecially* Chap. 17. Numb. 5. 6.

Hab. 1. 26.

ſervum in homine arbitrium inducere; non debet virtus tolli ut tollatur arrogantia. Sufficit, 1. *Quod nec velle nec perficere poſſint,* Pag. 97. *niſi Deus & voluntatem excitet & vires augeat.* 2. *Quod ea, quæ divinis adjuti viribus faciunt, nullo modo dignitate & pretio divinæ gratiæ reſpondeat, ſed infinito intervallo ab ea abſint.* Nay, though the Modern and Degenerate Jews be, upon the Score of being the great Patrons of Man's Free-will, not cauſſelſly eſteem'd the great Oppugners of God's Free grace; yet both from their Famous Rabbi, and my Learned Acquaintance, *Menaſſeh Ben Iſrael*, and from divers others of their moſt eminent Writers, has the truth ſometimes extorted Confeſſions, which, though made upon Erroneous grounds, were not very far ſhort of Orthodox. To which purpoſe I remember, that a Jewiſh Profeſſor of Hebrew, (who aſſiſted me in my ſtudies of that myſterious Tongue) being, as the reſt of his Nation, an eager and peremptory Champion of Free-will, conceiv'd, that even that Liberty, which to us ſeems leaſt to Indebt men to their Creator, did tranſcendently Oblige him unto God. For, one Day that we were privatly and freely diſcourſing together of matters of Religion, he told me, he thoght Men ow'd more to God's Goodneſſe, than the very Angels do. For, ſaid he, where-

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as God, without any good Work of theirs, but purely out of his Goodneſſe, conferr'd on them that bleſt Condition they enjoy; by giving Man a Free-will, by the good Uſe of which he may Glorifie his Maker; when, by Abuſing it, 'tis in his power to Diſhonour him, he allows Man that higheſt Satisfaction and Priviledge, of Co-operating to his own Felicity.

And now, *Lindamor*, we are arrived at the laſt Property, which qualifies God, the fitteſt Object for our Love, which is, the *Advantagiouſneſs* of His to us both in the Preſent and the Future Life. And firſt, even in this World we owe God no leſſe than All the Goods we poſſeſſe. We owe him both What we have, and That we are: For we may truly ſay of God with the Pſalmiſt, *It is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves.* And we were not only in his hands, ſo like *Clay in the Potter's*, that he might have made us Any thing; but we were ſo purely that Negative, from whence we were extracted, that He (if he had pleaſed) for ever might have left us to our firſt Nothing. His Love is the Original and Fountain-bleſſing; all the reſt are but as Pipes (and Inſtruments) to Convey it, and ſerve but to hand it to us. Your Wit wins you Applauſe, Your Induſtry heaps you up Treaſures; be it granted. But who gave you

Sect. 18. Pſal. 110. verſ. 3. Iſa. 64 8.

that Wit? and did both Give and Prosper that boasted Industry? Certainly, God as much Gives us all the Goods we Possesse, as he that gives a Beggar a thousand Pounds, gives him the Cloaths, and Meat, and all the Bravery it helps him to. But besides these more obvious Presents of God's Bounty, we enjoy other Effects of his Goodness, which, though by the Customarinesse of their being possessed, they prove lesse Conspicuous than the other, yet grow no lesse Priz'd, when the Want or Losse of them makes us sensible of the true Value of them. Had I the leisure, *Lindamor*, to lead your Thoughts with me to the Galleys, and shew you there those wretched Captives, that are Chain'd to the Oars they tugg at, and though expos'd to all the Miseries and Hardships of a tempestuous Sea, have oftentimes cause given them, by their Barbarous Usage ashore, to fear the Ocean lesse than any Port save Death. Could I draw for you the Curtains of Sick and Dying-men, and open to you that sad Scene, where some pine and languish away by Distempers, that deprive them of all the Joys, Advantages, and (what is more considerable) Uses of Life, before they ease them of Life, it self; others breath rather than Live, perpetually Tormented either with their Diseases or Physick to protract a wretched Life, upon tearms that turn it into a Trouble:

Trouble: And Others ſtruggling with the rude Pangs of Death, are yet perchance leſſe tormented by Them, than by the ſad Proſpect of their Former Life, and the Remembrance of thoſe Criminal pleaſures, *which yet it perhaps leſſe troubles them that they muſt now forgo, than that they once enjoy'd them.* Should I, *Lindamor*, bring you into Hoſpitals, and ſhew you there the various ſhapes of Human Miſery, and how many Souls, narrowly lodg'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) in Synecdochical bodies, ſee their earthen Cottages moulder away to Duſt; thoſe miſerable Perſons by the loſſe of one *Limb* after another, ſurviving but Part of Themſelves, and living to ſee themſelves Dead and Buried by piece-meal. Should I, to diſpatch, *Lindamor*, ſhew you all the ſeveral Companies of Mourners, that almoſt make up Mankind, and diſcloſe to you how copious ſhowrs of Tears do almoſt every where Water (not to ſay Over-flow) this Vale of Miſeries: You would perchance ſee cauſe to think, that God's Privative (if I may ſo ſpeak) may contend with his Poſitive Favours; and that you owe little leſs for what you are Not, than for what you Are, to that diſcriminating Mercy of his, to which alone you owe your Exemption from miſeries, as great as the Bleſſing it confers on you: For, *Who maketh thee to differ?* 2Cor.4.7

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is a Queſtion that may be as well ask'd in reference to our External, as to our Spiritual Condition. Which invites me to mind you, *Lindamor*, that you are yet more engag'd to Gods Love, for Protecting you from thoſe groſſe Vices that Disfigure moſt Men's minds, than from thoſe leſſe Dangerous, though more Reſented, Diſeaſes that Diſtemper their Bodies.

For, Ambition, Luſt, Avarice, Revenge, and even that *vain Converſation* which young Gentlemen are generally pleas'd to think ſo Innocent, are really more Formidable and pernicious Diſeaſes and Calamities, than thoſe that reduce Men to take Phyſick, or thruſt them into Hoſpitals. To evince the truth of which Paradox, I hope I ſhall not need to mind you of judging of the Dangerouſneſs of Diſeaſes by the Nobleneſſe of the part affected, ſince I can tell you, that He that cannot err, ſeems daily to juſtifie our Aſſertion, by inflicting Sickneſſe and the ſharpeſt outward Calamities on his own Deareſt Children, to preſerve them from the Contagion of Sin, or Cure them of the unfilial Habitudes of it. And therefore, ſince, when we ſee a tender Mother apply a painful Cauſtick to the neck of her Favorite Infant, threatned by the Apoplexie, we ſcruple not to conclude, that ſhe thinks the trouble of an Iſſue an Evil

1 Pet. 1. 18.

inferior

inferior to Convulsion-fits: So when we see our Heavenly Father send Infirmities and Crosses to rescue those he Loves from the Contagion or the Dominion of Sin; we may safely conclude, he thinks Affliction a less Evil then Guilt, since he is too Wise and Indulgent a Physician to Cure with a Remedy worse than the Disease. In the 8 of *Deuteronomy*, there is a Caution given the *Israelits*, lest Prosperity (which is wont to be a kind of Lethe, that makes men Forget all, but their Enjoyments) should make any of them say in his heart, *My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this Wealth. But* (saith the Text) *they shall remember the Lord their God: for it is he that giveth them power to get Wealth.* It is not the revolting *Israelites* only, of whose Ignorance of his Bounty God may complain, as he did by the Prophet, by whom he said, *I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their arms, but they knew not that I healed them*: And there are but too many, of whom he might say, as he did by the same Prophet; *For she did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multipli'd her Silver, and her Gold which they prepar'd for Baal: Therefore will I return and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine, in the Season thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax given to cover her Nakedness.*

Deut. 8. 17, 18.

Hos. 11. 3.

Hos. 1. 8, 9.

Nakedneſſe. And this will make way for the Deſign I had to recommend the Advantagiouſneſſe of God's Love, by ſaying, That as for Spiritual Goods, he gives us in this Life ſo rich an Earneſt of expected Joys, that even the Earneſt is a Stock large enough to ſubſiſt with Comfort on, and really out-values and tranſcends all thoſe Momentany Pleaſures, it requires us to forſake, to keep up a Title to Eternal ones. But to particularize God's mercies to us in this very life, would certainly take up a Conſiderable part of it. And yet the Love, God bears us, Dies not with us, nor doth (as Mens Affections) either endure a Funeral in our Tombs, or ſurvive only in an uſeleſs Grief, (or an Eſteem as bootleſſe.) No, Gods love is ſo far from reſembling the uſual ſort of Friends, who when they have accompanied us to the Grave, do There leave us; that, like the Angels, that *carried Lazarus's Soul to Abraham's boſom*, its Officiouſneſſe begins then moſt to Appear, when our dark Eyes are Cloſ'd, and is then Trueſt to the beloved Soul, when ſhe Forſakes the Body; giving each bleſſed Saint cauſe to ſay of God what *Noami* did of *Boaz*, that *He hath not left off his kindneſſe to the Living, and to the Dead. Now*, indeed (ſays our Saviour's Favorite) *are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we*

Luke 16. 22.

Ruth 2. 20.

1 Joh. 3. 1

we ſhall be: But we know, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him. This bleſt Expectance muſt be now my Theme, becauſe the narrow Limits, which my Deſign hath plac'd to this Diſcourſe, (of the Advantages accruing from God's Love) will leave no more room untaken up by Heaven.

But, *Lindamor*, before *I* proceed to ſet forth to you the Greatneſſe of the Felicity reſerv'd for us in Heaven, it will, I fear, be requiſite to mind you of the Lawfulneſſe of having an Eye to it. For many not undeſervedly applauded Preachers, have of late been pleas'd to teach the People, that to Hope for Heaven is a Mercenary, Legal, and therefore Unfilial Affection. Indeed, to Hope for Heaven as Wages for Work perform'd, or by way of Merit, in the proper and ſtrict Acception of that tearm, were a Preſumption, to which, none of the Divines, we diſſent from, can be too much an Enemy, nor perhaps more ſo, than I am. But to take in God's Bleſſings among the Motives of Loving God, is, but to do as he did, who ſaid, *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice, and my ſupplications*; and to Look upon the Joys of Heaven, to Comfort and Support us in the Hardſhips and Loſſes to be undergon in our Journey thitherward, is, to Imitate no worſe a Man than *Moſes*, of whom it is ſaid, that *he eſteemed the reproach*

Sect. 19.

Pſ. 116. 1.

Heb. 11. 26.

proach of Christ greater riches than the Treasures in Ægypt; for he had respect, or turn'd his Eye, (ἀπέβλεπε) *unto the recompence of the reward.* It is indeed, *Lindamor*, a happy Frame of mind, to be able to love God purely for Himself, without any Glance at our own Advantages. But though I dare not deny, that it is Possible to attain to so High and disinteress'd a kind of Love, yet I think, that that Excellency, suppos'd to be Vouchsaf'd to some Men, is not by the Scripture Exacted as a Duty from All men. Were all the recompence of Piety of a Worldly Nature, and to be Here receiv'd, the Actions invited to, by the Intuition of it, might passe for Mercenary. But when Heaven is chiefly hoped for, as it will admit us unto the fruition of God himself in Christ, and that the Other Joys expected there are so far from being of a Sensual or Worldly nature, that they are known not to be attainable, till by Death, the Senses and Bodies themselves, and all the meerly Animal Faculties be aboliſh'd: for a Heaven so consider'd, I say, to Forgo readily all the Pleasures of the Senses, and Undergo cheerfully all the Hardships and Dangers that are wont to attend a Holy Life, is, *Lindamor*, such a kind of Mercinarineſſe, as none, but a Resigned, Noble, and Believing Soul, is likely to be guilty of. If I should

say,

ſay, that Fear it ſelf, and even the Fear of Hell, may be one Juſtifiable Motive of Mens Actions, though I ſhould propoſe, what thoſe I am reaſoning with would think a Paradox; yet I ſhould perhaps hold forth therein no more than the Scripture does, *Let us therefore fear* (ſays the Writer to the Hebrews) *leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his Reſt, any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Heb. 4. 1. And no leſſe eminent a Herald of the Goſpel than St. *Paul*, who ſo ſucceſsfully maintain'd the Evangelical againſt the Legal Spirit, thus profeſſeth of himſelf, *I keep under my body, and bring it into ſubjection, leſt by any means, when I have preach'd to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſtaway.* 1 Cor. 9. 27. And 'twas not to Slaves or Hirelings, that Chriſt directs this Admonition, *I ſay unto you*, my Friends, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forwarn you whom you ſhall fear, Fear him, which after he hath kill'd, hath power to caſt into Hell; Yea, I ſay unto you,* (a gemination, which the preſent Controverſie ſhews not to have been Cauſeleſs) *Fear him.* Luk. 12. 4, 5. Where the Paraphraſe given of God, is not barely Deſcriptive but Ratiocinative, (to borrow thoſe tearms of the Schools) informing us, not only Whom we ſhould, and ſhould not fear, but Why we ſhould fear the one and not the

the other. As when St. *Paul* says, *I know whom I have trusted*, he means what manner of
1 Pet. 4. 19. Person, *how Faithful*, (as St. *Peter* elsewhere calls God) *and how Omnipotent*: whence immediately he adds, *And I am perswaded, that*
2 Tim. 1. 12. *he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day*. More Texts of the same Import might be added, if the Design of those already alleg'd were other, than to Facilitate the Admission of the more Plausible truth we have been making out, and which to us seems very clearly held forth in those and the like Scriptures, which are therefore cited out of the New Testament, that they might have the greater Authority
Phil. 3. 14. with one sort of our Antagonists. *I presse toward the mark for the prize of the high calling*
Rev. 22. 14. *of the God in Christ Jesus. Blessed are they that do his Commandements, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may en-*
1 Tim. 6. 19. *ter in through the Gates into the City. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may*
Rom. 2. 17. *lay hold of eternal Life. To them, who by patient continuing in wel-doing, seek for (ζητοῦσι) Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal life*. And of Christ himself, whose Love to God is questionless Filial & Unequalable,
Heb. 12. 2. 'tis said, *Looking unto Jesus the Author & Finisher of our Faith, who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Crosse, despised*

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...one, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God. Nor ſee I why it ſhould be Unfilial for a Child of God to further the raiſing of thoſe Paſſions, which his heavenly Father intends no have rais'd in him, upon the ſame Grounds and Motives that God is pleaſed to imploy to Excite them. And ſince the Scripture ſeems plainly to invite our Hopes, by recording St. *Paul's* having ſaid, *Every man that ſtriveth for the maſtery is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible*: And by repreſenting our Saviour himſelf, as ſaying in one place, *Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven*: In another, *Be thou faithful nnto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And in divers others ſpeaking to the like purpoſe; Since, I ſay, the Stripture ſeems thus to allure our Hopes, would it not be a kind of accuſing it of an Aptneſſe to delude and enſnare us, To teach, that it propoſeth to us the powerfulleſt Objects to Incite our Paſſions, if it be ſinful to cheriſh and harbour the Paſſions naturally belonging to thoſe Objects? And certainly, *Lindamor*, ſince God, who, as our Creator, knows the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, incomparably better than he himſelf, is pleas'd to deal with our Hopes and our Fears, to

1 Cor. 9. 25.

Mat. 5 12

Rev. 2. 10.

engage us to his Service; It very ill becomes Us, either to quarrel with his Methods of working on our Spirits, or to reject any Help which he has been pleas'd to afford a Piety, which for ought ever I could observe, does even in the best Men find resistance enough to keep any Help that can be employed to promote it from being Superstitious. And truly, the Animating or Discouraging Influence, that Hope, or the Want of it, is wont to have upon our Endeavours, makes me very apprehensive, that since the Enlivening hopes of Heaven are not able to make most Men's Endeavours other than very Languid, the forbidding those supporting Hopes would soon Weaken and Decrease our Endeavours into none at all.

Sect. 20. But, *Lindamor*, though I may perhaps have taken some Pains in studying Controversal Divinity, yet I take so little pleasure in Writing of it, that though not only a Seasonable Duty to truth, but a Necessary one to the ensuing part of this Discourse, have prest me to serve in this cause; yet I shall perhaps obtain Your pardon, sooner than my Own, for having thus long suspended the Discoursing to you of the *Advantagiousness* of God's love to us, as it gives us Here a Right, and will Hereafter give us Admission, to Heaven. Heaven,

ven, the bright Seat of so much Happinesse, that we shall scarcely count amongst our Joys, that Heaven is the Seat of them. There the Excellency of the possessed Goods shall as much disappoint our Expectations, as in other fruitions the Emptinesse is wont to do. The Apostle tells us, that *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.* Such pure refin'd Delights not onely stoop not unto Sense, but are sublime enough even to transcend Imagination. When Fancy hath form'd and shap'd the Perfectest Idæas, that its Abstractions can make, of Blessednesse; our own more happy Experiences of greater, must disabuse us, when we come to Heaven, which is a Soyl, whose fruitfulnesse is so confin'd to Joy, that even our Disappointments and Mistakes shall there contribute to our Happinesse; which will so much partake of his Immensity, whose Gift it is, that you see the Apostle gives it a Negative Description: And to create in us Apprehensions underogatory from what we shall Possess, not onely removes our thoghts From all we *Do* Enjoy, but Exalts them Above all that we Can Fancy. At which way of proceeding, that you may the lesse wonder, *Lindamor*, be pleas'd to consider, that in Heaven our Faculties shall not only 1 Cor. 2. 9.

be Gratifi'd with ſuitable and acceptable Objects, but ſhall be Heightened and Enlarg'd, and conſequently our Capacities of Happineſſe, as well Encreas'd as Fill'd. A Child not yet releas'd out of the homely Priſon of the Womb, cannot there poſſibly frame Ideas of thoſe delights, which will be afforded him by the pleaſing Noiſes, and the glittering Objects, that will preſent themſelves to him after his birth. And the ſame Child, whilſt he continues in his Nonage, though he may with Delights look upon Emblems finely Drawn and Painted, and may take ſome pleaſure in beholding the neat and ſurprizing Characters & Flouriſhes of a Greek and Hebrew Bible curiouſly Printed; yet he cannot then Imagine the Pleaſure the ſame Objects will afford him, when Age and Study ſhall have ripen'd and inſtructed his Intellectuals, and made him capable both of Underſtanding, and Relliſhing the excellent Moralities, couch'd in thoſe ingenious Emblems, and the profound and ſaving Myſteries, wherewith that Divine Book, the Scripture, (eſpecially in its Original Tongues) does to an Intelligent and Religious Peruſer, appear Repleniſh'd. Such a double advantage, *Lindamor*, among others, the Admiſſion into Heaven brings thoſe, to whom that Bleſſing is vouchſaf'd: For, beſides that Set of Objects, (if

I may

I may ſo ſpeak) ſo New, and ſo Peculiar to Heaven, that their Ideas could never enter into Mens thoughts before their Admiſſion there; beſides this, I ſay, our then enlarg'd Capacities will enable us, even in Objects which were not altogether Unknown to us before, to perceive things formerly Undiſcern'd, and derive thence both New and Greater Satisfactions and Delights. Won-not, *Lindamor*, that in mentioning the Joys of Heaven, I uſe Expreſſions I find leaſt Detractury from a Theme, as much above our Praiſes, as the Heaven they are enjoy'd in is above our Heads. For, though ſuch Expreſſions may ſeem ſomewhat Tumid and and Aſpiring, and fitter much for one that Celebrates, than for one that but Aſſerts: Yet cannot I ſcruple to uſe Seeming Hyperboles in the mention of Felicities, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but Seeming ones. For theſe Joys, *Lindamor*, of Heaven, are like its Stars, which by reaſon of our Remoteneſſe from them, appear extremely Little, though really in themſelves they are ſo Vaſt, that a leſſe than the largeſt is by Odds Greater than the biggeſt Object upon Earth, nay, then the whole Earth it ſelf. And therefore, as if I were to take you with me to contemplate the Planets, I would ſhew you them through ſuch a Teleſcope, as by greatning thoſe bright

Objects in comparison of what to the unassisted Eye they appear, doth somewhat lessen the Disadvantage of Remoteness, and shews them with lesse Detraction from their true Magnitude; so mentioning to you the Felicities of Heaven, I think it not Unlawful or Improper to endeavour by Representations, transcending what they Appear, to give you Notions lesse inferiour to what they Are.

Sect. 21. In Heaven, then, we shall taste Happiness enough, to enable us to rectifie the Definition of it. We may there be instructed how to Name and Rate all Goods by those that will Concentre into the Felicity we shall possesse, which shall be there made up of the Confluence, Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys. For, Heaven will make us Happy, not (as Philosophy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Desires: which shall neither Fail in the Choice of their Objects, nor Misse of the Enjoyment of them; but be, both unerringly Just, and infallibly Accomplish'd: In the former of which properties, (as our then Rectifi'd Reason will consider things) we shall think our selves happier (yet) than in the later. We shall there Resemble the Saints we here Admire, and shall not only See, but be Like those pious Worthies, whose virtues Eclipse theirs, which

which among the Heathen Deifi'd leſſe deſerving Heroes; thoſe excellent Perſons that did as well Ennoble as Inſtruct Mankind, giving us cauſe to Glory, and to Bluſh that we are Men, and whoſe Stories have the unparallel'd Honour of being recorded by Inſpired Pens; Thoſe *Spirits*, I ſay, *of juſt Men made perfect*, as the Scripture tearms them, ſhall be our conſtant and familiar Company, into whoſe bleſſed Society we ſhall not onely be Welcome, but Encreaſe it. In Heaven, we ſhall have a bleſſ'd and familiar Converſation with thoſe ſame glorious Spirits, whoſe Nature doth inveſt them with ſuch a Luſtre, that all the Diſadvantage of their Diſguiſes, when they Appear to us, doth ſcarce ſuffice to confine our Raptures to Reſpects below Idolatry, and darken them into Objects for our Wonder, not Adoration. There we ſhall ſee (a Sight worthy Dying for) that Bleſſed Saviour, of whom the Scripture does ſo Much, and ſo Excellently entertain us, and who having Done and Suffer'd ſo much for us, does ſo highly deſerve of us, both upon the ſcore of his Infinite Perfections, and upon the account of his Ineſtimable Benefits. Yes, there ſhall we ſee that Holy and Divine Perſon, who, when he vouchſaf'd (as his Favourite-Diſciple ſpeaks) *to pitch his Tent among us*, and dwell with Men on Earth, to

Heb. 12. 23.

Ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. Joh. 1. 14.

fit them by his Merits and Example to dwell with him in Heaven, did ſo admirably mix an awfull Majeſty with an humble Meekneſſe, and the aſſum'd Infirmities of his Human Nature, with the ſeaſonable Corruſcations of his Divine; and expreſs'd in his whole Life, ſo Perfect and Exemplary a Virtue, and yet ſo much Sweetneſſe and Gentleneſſe towards thoſe Aſpirers to it, that were the moſt Short of it; that the Jews themſelves could ſay of him, That
Mat. 7. 37 *he had done all things well*; and his very Enemies, that were employ'd to apprehend him as a Malefactor, confeſſ'd even to thoſe that ſent them to do ſo, That *never Man*
Joh. 7. 46 *ſpake like him.* And his Apoſtles, who had moſt Opportunity to Pry narrowly into his Actions, and were of a Condition and Breeding very unlike to infuſe into them Heroick Reſolutions, did, in Spight of the frequent Reproofs their failings extorted from him, and of the Hardſhips that attended his Service, think even Death it ſelf in his Company, more Eligible, than Life led out of it; *Let us alſo go that we may dye with*
Joh. 11. 16. *him*, (ſays even the diſtruſtful *Thomas* to his fellow-Diſciples.) But, *Lindamor*, we ſhall there ſee the Son of God, not in that *Form*
Phil. 2. 7. *of a Servant*, which he put on that he might Suffer for us, and exerciſe his Prieſtly and Prophetick Function here below; but in

that

that Regal State and Condition, which belongs to him by Virtue of his Kingly Office; on whose score he is styled in the Scripture, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, Rev. 19 16. All power or authority being (as himself speaks) given Him both in Heaven and in Earth. Mat. 28 18. And how Nobly attended may we suppose this Divine Monarch to be in his Exalted Condition in Heaven, when in his state of Humiliation on Earth, whilst he was in the *Wilderness among the wild Beasts, the Angels* are recorded to have *ministred unto him*; Mat. 1 13 and, whilst he lay swath'd in a homely Manger, the multitude of the Cœlestial Host were heard to solemnize his miraculous Birth, according to that passage of the Writer to the *Hebrews*, *When he bringeth in the first begotten into the World*, (he saith) *And let all the Angels of God worship him*! Luk. 1. Heb. 1. 6. And yet such considerable and noble Creatures, those Immaterial Intelligences call'd Angels, are, that One of them in One night was able to destroy above a hundred and fourscore thousand Men, in the blasphemous *Senacherib's* impious Camp. 2 King. 19 35. And so much Majesty, and Superiority, does their Nature give them, in reference even to the Eminentest of Mortals, That, when the undaunted *Joshua* had boldly Challeng'd one of them, that appear'd to him in the likeness of a Man, and demanded, Whom he was for?

when

when he knew him to be an Angel, (unleſs he ſuppoſ'd him to be that promiſ'd Meſſiah, who is elſewhere call'd *the Angel of the Covenant*, as it is in the Original, and in the ſame Text *the Lord*) he alters his Addreſſe unto him into this Submiſſive one, *What ſaith my Lord unto his Servant*? And even wiſe and holy *Daniel* himſelf, who was the ſecond Perſon of the World for Power, and the firſt for much nobler Attributes, Wiſdom, and Underſtanding, who ſaw ſo many Governours of vaſt Provinces, and Profeſſors of admired *Magick*, inferiour to himſelf, yet confeſſes to the Angel, that appear'd to him, That he was confounded and diſanimated at his preſence, and adds, *How can the Servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord*? We may ſafely therefore expect, that we ſhall then behold our Saviour, not in thoſe *Diſguiſes* which diſfigur'd him in their Eyes, that only conſider'd his Sufferings, but in that triumphant Condition, wherewith they are now Rewarded. The Thorns of his (now no more Galling, but Adorning) Crown will appear upon that radiant Head of His, more glorious, than thoſe of the flaming Buſh, wherein God appeared to *Moſes*. And we ſhall not ſee that Deſpicable form, which made the Prophet ſay, (perſonating the generality of the Jewiſh Nation contemporary with the Meſſias)

Mal. 3. 1.

Joſh. 5. 13, 14.

Dan. 10 17.

Exod. 3 2.

Meſſias) ——— *He hath no Form, nor Comelineſſe, and when we ſhall ſee him, there is no Beauty that we ſhould deſire.* But we ſhal ſee him encompaſſ'd with ſo much Majeſty, & ſhining with ſo much of his genuine Splendor and Beauty, that we ſhall deſervedly eſteem him *Nephle, the Admirable.* And our raviſh'd Souls ſhall by the more attentive Contemplation of him, but find more cauſe to imitate the Spouſe in *Solomon's* myſtick *Epithalamium*; who having dwelt upon the Beauty of the ſeveral Parts that concurr'd to the Accompliſhing the Divine Bridegroom, exclaims in an Epiphonema, very contrary to the Expreſſion lately mention'd in the Prophet, *He is altogether Deſires*, or by an Hebraiſm, *Moſt deſirable*, which our Engliſh renders, *He is altogether lovely.* His Eyes will there appear, as St. *John* repreſents them, of active Fire, and will into the willing Breaſts of the raviſh'd beholders, ſhoot Flames as Pure, as Holy, and as Deathleſs, as thoſe Fathers of the Church, who believ'd not the Angels altogether Incorporeal, may be ſuppoſ'd to have conceiv'd the Seraphims to conſiſt of. Certainly, ſince (as the Scripture informs us) *It never entred into the Heart of Man, what God has reſerv'd in Heaven for thoſe that love him*; That Glory can be but Imperfectly expreſſ'd by the bare Epithet of Inconceivable,

Iſa. 53. 2

Iſa. 9. 6

Cant. 5. 10.

Rev. 1. 14

ceivable, with which God rewards the meritorious Sufferings and Obedience of that Onely begotten Son of his Love, for whose ſake he is pleaſ'd to confer on ſo many Thouſands of Men, unimaginable Glories.

Dan. 12. 3 He that vouchſafes ev'n to many of his Servants a Brightneſſe like that of the Stars, will ſure communicate a more radiant

Mal. 4. 2 Luſtre to the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*, that Onely Son of His, *whom* (to borrow in-

Heb. 1. 2, 3. ſpir'd Expreſſions) *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the Worlds: Who being the brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purg'd our Sins, ſate down*

Eph. 1. 21 *on the right hand of the Majeſty on high, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named, not onely in this World, but in that which is to come.* Thereby exalting him not onely above all Earthly Princes and Potentates, but even above the Higheſt Orders of the Spirits of the Cœleſtial Hierarchie.

Sect. 22 But apprehend not, *Lindamor*, that this ſublime Exaltation of Chriſt will make him deſpiſe the meaneſt of his Saints, or diſdain Communion with him. For, St. *Paul* aſ-

Phil. 2. 7. ſures us, That he was in the *form of God*, when he vouchſaf'd to take upon him the form of a Servant, to make us Free; and,

ſure,

ſure, he that condeſcended ſo Far, and ſtoop'd ſo Low, to Invite and Bring us to Heaven, will not refuſe us a gracious Reception there. In the days of his Fleſh he was pleas'd to own *Lazarus*, ev'n in the Diſhonours of the Grave, and vouchſaf'd him in that deſpicable Condition the glorious Title of his Friend. And when he deſcended the Mount of Olives, all the loud Acclamations of the glad Multitude, that ſang *Hoſannaes* to him, and ſtrew'd his way with their Palms, their Veſtments, and their Praiſes, could not divert him from Deploring, ev'n with Tears, *Jeruſalem's* approaching Fate; and expreſſing in the midſt of his Triumphs a Concern, for the very worſt and ſtubborneſt of his Enemies. And, leſt it ſhould be thought, that he was thus concern'd for worthleſſe Mortals, only whilſt he Shar'd and Felt the Miſeries of their Condition; give me leave to obſerve to you, *Lindamor*, that immediatly after his Reſurrection, whilſt the Senſe of the ſudden and unexempled Change of his Condition was Freſh upon him, and the Remembrance of the Apoſtle's Ingratitude in deſerting him, almoſt as Recent; he ſticks not to give thoſe very Diſciples that forſook him, the glorious Title, (and a more Familiar one than we find him have allow'd them on Earth) of *his Brethren*;

Luk. 19. 37, 38, 41

Matth. 28 10.

thren; and particularly shews himself Sol-
Mar. 16. 7 licitous for that *Peter*, who, in spight of all those empty Boasts, wherewith he not only seem'd to defie *Death*, but Christ's Prediction too, did not onely Forsake his Master, but *Deni'd* him. He can in Heaven be so concern'd for his distressed Members here on Earth, that not only he can take
Acts 7. notice of expiring *Stephen*, thorow that cloud of fatal Stones that batter'd down his Prison; and can, when *Saul* was persecuting the vulgar Christians, cry out unto him,
Acts 9. 4. *Saul, Saul, Why persecuteſt thou me?* as if He, and those that Love him, were but
In the second and third Chapters of the *Apocalyps.* One: But in the *Messages* he sends to the Angels or Governours of the seven Churches, he sufficiently manifests, That single Christians may be as particularly in his Thoughts, as if they had no other Object: His Greatnesse will not make his Kindnesse less Familiar, but only more Obliging; He disdains not, ev'n after his Ascension, to
Rev. 3. 20 say, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any Man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* That King, in the Parable, by whom Himself is represented, is pleas'd himself to welcome each Individual trusty
Mat. 25. Servant with a peculiar, *Euge bone Serve*; And in another Parable he scruples not to represent the great Condescensions and Familiarity,

miliarity, wherewith the Lord ſhall remunerate the faithful and watchful Servants, by telling his Diſciples, *Bleſſed are thoſe Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo watching. Verily, I ſay unto you, that he ſhall gird himſelf, and will make them to ſit down to meat, and will come forth to ſerve them.* At which Expreſſion, you will the leſs Admire, if you Conſider, that beſides that it is Parabolical, and probably Hyperbolical, and therefore not to be taken (as the French ſpeak, *au pied de la lettre*) in a ſtrict ſence: We find in the Evangelical Story, that our Saviour diſdain'd not to converſe familiarly with Publicans and Sinners, nor even to waſh the feet of his own Diſciples: And ſince he condeſcended to ſuch Familiarity to thoſe frail Mortals, ſo many of whom were apt to turn the Favours of God into Wantonneſſe, we may the leſſe admire his gracious Condeſcenſions to thoſe, the Sinleſneſſe of whoſe Condition will keep them from turning his Vouchſafements into any thing, but Occaſions of Joy and Gratitude. Marvel not, *Lindamor*, as at an Impertinency, that I appear ſo Sollicitous to poſſeſſe you with high Apprehenſions of the Supereminent Dignity and Felicity of our Exalted Saviour; and, that in the Loftieſt and moſt magnificent Expreſſions, the Scripture affords me, I have endeavour'd to

Luk. 12 37.

make

make out to you, that the bright Sun of Righteousnesse is now grown uncapable of suffering Eclipses, but shines with unclouded and unequall'd Splendor; and that we shall in Heaven (as the Writer to the *Hebrews* speaks) *see Jesus, who was made a little* (or for a short while, βραχύ τι) *lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death, crown'd with Glory and Honour.* For it will make Heaven more Heaven to us, to find Him reigning there, who hath Suffer'd so much for Us; and for whom, if we e'r come thither, we shall have so much Suffer'd. For, since our Love will, as the rest of our surviving Graces, be Perfected, and grow Compleat in Heaven; the ineffable Happinesse of our Dear Redeemer, must needs bring an Encrease to ours, commensurate to the Ardency of our Love for him, and we shall relish no Happinesse more than That; which is therefore Ours, because He is happy, and Supposes in Him, what it Confers on Us. Besides that, since the Regal Dignity, wherein (as *Mediator*) he is Instated, may make us owe our Salvation to his Sentence, as well as to his *Merits*; Heaven it self will be inestimably endear'd to us, by our Injoying it upon his Account. I need not tell you, what a value Lovers are wont to set upon the least favours that can be bestow'd on them by their *Mistresses*, and that oftentimes

Heb. 2, 9.

times a worthleſſe Ribband, a Bracelet of Hair, or ſome ſuch Trifle, that nothing can make precious but Her preſenting it, is highlier valued by the tranſported Lover, than the richeſt Preſents of Nature, or of Fortune. How great a bleſſing muſt it then be, *Lindamor*, to owe Joys that need not endearing Circumſtances to merit the name of Happineſſe, to a Perſon ſo belov'd, that even Heaven it ſelf will bring more felicity to the amorous Soul, as it is a proof of his Love, than that it is a Donative of his Bounty. As paſſionate Brides do incomparably more value the Wedding-Rings which their glad Lovers give them, as Pledges, than as Gold. 'Tis ſaid of the perſecuted and diſgrac'd Apoſtles, that *they rejoyc'd to have been counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name.* Act. 5.41 But if they deſervedly Rejoyc'd to be allow'd to ſuffer for him; of how much Joy ſhall they have juſt cauſe, that are admitted to Reign with him? His having ſupported the Hardſhips and the Toyls (for I muſt not now call them Evils) to which our afflicted Condition of Mortality is Expoſ'd, does ſo much Alleviate them, and refreſh us under them, that in this ſence alſo it may be truly ſaid, that *the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his hurts we are healed.* Iſa. 53. 5. But he that Reliev'd us even by his Croſſe, will ſure do

More for us by his Crown, when he ſhall Admit, and even Invite, each faithful Servant to no leſſe a Bleſſing, than *to enter into his Maſters Joy.* So rich a Source of Happineſſe did Chriſt Deſign, to Make himſelf to us in all his Capacities and Conditions, that in Heaven and in Earth, it Was, and Will be, his gracious and conſtant Imployment, to ſhare our Griefs, or impart to us his Joys; and either Leſſen our Miſeries by his Sufferings, or Encreaſe our Happineſſe by his Felicity.

Mat. 25 21.

Sect. 23. Expect not, *Lindamor*, that I ſhould Solemnly beg your Pardon for this ſeeming Excurſion, till I come to think it a Digreſſion, to inſiſt on the Bleſſedneſſe of Chriſt in Heaven, treating of the Happineſſe which thoſe that Love him will enjoy there. Wherefore, not to ſpend time in imploring a needleſſe Forgiveneſſe, I ſhall proceed to tell you, *Lindamor*, that in Heaven we ſhall not only ſee our Elder Brother Chriſt, but probably alſo all our Kindred, Friends, and Relations, that Living here in his Fear, Died in his Favour. For, ſince our Saviour tells us, that *the Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be* ἰσάγγελοι, *equal to*, or like, *the Angels*: who yet in the Viſions of *Daniel* and St. *John*, appear to be acquainted with each other: Since in the Parable of the Miſerable Epicure, and the Happy Beggar, the Father

Luk. 20 36.

Luke 16.

Father of the Faithful is repreſented, as knowing, not only the Perſon, and preſent Condition, but the paſt Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Inſtructor of the Gentiles, confidently expects his Converted and Pious *Theſſalonians*, to be *his Crown* at *that great Day*; When the *having turned many to Righteouſneſs*, ſhall, as the Scripture foretells, confer a Star-like and Immortal Brightneſs. Since (which is chiefly conſiderable) the Knowledge of particular Actions, and, conſequently, Perſons, ſeems requiſite to the attainment of that Great End of God, in the Day of Judgment, the Manifeſtation of his Punitive and Remunerative Juſtice: Since, I ſay, theſe Arguments, beſides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture; we may ſafely conclude it Probable, that we ſhall Know each other, in a Place, where, ſince nothing requiſite to *Happineſſe* can be wanting, we may well ſuppoſe (at leaſt, if we can imagine *Here*, what we ſhall think There) that we ſhall not want ſo great a Satisfaction, as that of being knowingly *Happy*, in our Other-ſelves, our *Friends*. Nor is this only Probable, *Lindamor*, but 'tis not Improbable, that thoſe Friends that Know us in Heaven, ſhall Welcome us thither. For, ſince Chriſt aſſures us, that the very Angels (though they be ſo far from being Related to our Perſons, that they are Foreiners to

1 Theſſ. 2 19, 20 Dan. 2.

Luk 15.7 our very Nature) receive Acceſſion of Joy for a relenting Sinner, that by Repentance Begins to turn towards God; you will not think it Abſurd, that in a Place, where Charity ſhall not only continue, (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks) but grow perfect, our dear Friends ſhould rejoyce to ſee us, not only Begin to Turn towards God, but Come Home to him. Nor is it unlikely, that our tranſported Souls ſhall mutually Congratulate each other, their having now fully eſcaped the numerous Rocks, and Shelves, and Quick-ſands, and threatning Storms, and no leſſe dangerous Calms, through which they are at length arrived at that peaceſull Haven, where Innocence & Delight (which are here ſo ſeldom match'd) are inſeparable Companions, both of each other, and each bleſſed Reſident. With thoſe Friends we here Lamented, we ſhall there Rejoyce. And 'twill be but need, that the Diſcovery of each other's Virtues ſhould bring us to a mutual Knowledge of our Perſons; for otherwiſe, we ſhall be ſo Chang'd, that we ſhould never know our Friends; (and ſhould ſcarce know our ſelves, were not an eminent Encreaſe of Knowledge a Part of that happy Change.) For thoſe Departed Friends, whom, at our laſt Separation, we ſaw Diſfigured by all the ghaſtly Horrors of Death, we ſhall then ſee aſſiſting about the Majeſtick Throne

1 Cor. 13. 8.

Throne of Chriſt, with their once *vile Bodies transfigured into the likeneſſe of his glorious Body*, mingling their glad Acclamations with the Hallelujahs of Thrones, Principalities, and Powers, and the moſt digniſi'd Favourits of the Cœleſtial Court. I need not tell you, *Lindamor*, that we ſhall be more juſtly Tranſported at this Meeting, than was good old *Jacob* at that of his Son *Joſeph*, whom having long mourn'd for Dead and Loſt, he found not only Alive, but a great Favourite, ready to welcome him to an unknown Court. For, whereas the Patriarch ſaid to his Son, *Now let me Dye, ſince I have ſeen thy face*; the ſeeing of our Friends in Heaven will aſſure us, that we ſhall for ever Live with them there. The Re-union of Friends being there as privileg'd from divorce, as that of Soul and Body, (which ſcarce will be more ſtrict and ſatisfactory.) For, here indeed, if our Friends do not allay our Love or Affection by unwelcome Actions, or their contagious Sufferings, we commonly dote on them to a Degree, that, as it were, Reduces God to deprive us Early of them, & Snatch our Idols, & his Rivals, from us. But there, our, on both ſides, compleated Graces, will not only Deſerve, but Allow a higher Strain of Friendſhip. The near Contemplation and Fruition of the infinitely tranſcendent Perfecti-

Phil. 3. 21.

Gen. 46. 30.

ons of the Creator, keeping all our Kindneſs to the Creatures, not only Subordinate To the Love we owe to God, but Grounded On it; as excited Needles, when they ſtick faſteſt to each other, ow their Union to their having both been touched by the Load-ſtone; to which, they have therefore Both of them ſtronger Inclinations, than Either to the Other.

Sect. 24. There, probably, we ſhall ſatisfactorily underſtand thoſe Deep and Obſcure Myſteries of Religion, which, the profoundeſt Clerks that love not to Flatter themſelves, acknowledg, they are unable fully to Comprehend; being, after all the Toyl and Induſtry of their anxious Enquiries, reduc'd to ſit down with the Apoſtle's ὦ Βάθος, in Admiration of that Depth, whoſe Bottom they cannot Fathom. There we ſhall Underſtand thoſe obſcure paſſages of (That Divine Book, and uncapable of Flattery) the Scripture, which, notwithſtanding all that Bold Criticks, and Learn'd Expoſitors, have Attempted to illuſtrate it, does ſtill continue, in many Places, Obſcure. There, diſcerning how exquiſitely the ſeveral Parts of Scripture are fitted to the ſeveral Times, Perſons, and Occurrences, wherein their all-foreſeeing Author intended moſt to uſe them; we ſhall diſcern not only a Reconcilableneſs, but a Friendſhip, and perfect Harmony,

Rom. 11. 33.

mony, betwixt thoſe Texts, that here ſeem moſt at Variance, and ſhall diſcover not only the Senſe of the Obſcurer paſſages, but the Requiſiteneſs of their having been written ſo Obſcurely. That ſtrange and peculiar, as well as otherwiſe Cryptical Method & Style of Scripture, which often coſts us ſo much Study to find it Rational, we ſhall there diſcover to be Admirable, and worthy of its Omniſcient Author. There, I hope, we ſhall have clearly expounded to us thoſe Ridles of Providence, which have, but too often, Tempted ev'n Good-men, to Queſtion Gods Conduct in the Government of the World; whilſt the Calamities and Perſecutions of Virtue, and Innocence, ſeem Approv'd by him, who Accumulates Proſperities on their Criminal Oppoſers. There, we ſhall be convinc'd, that all theſe Seeming Irregularities, which the Heathen thought fit to impute to the giddy Whimſies of a Blind female Deity, are not only Conſiſtent with God's Juſtice and Goodneſſe, but are Productions of it. And though ſuch a Belief do here, to Intelligent Perſons, ſeem perhaps a greater piece of Self-denial, than to refrain from Wine, or Gold, or Miſtreſſes; yet in Heaven it will appear as Reaſonable, as here we find it Difficult. For, as *Bildad* ſpeaks in *Job*, *We are but of yeſterday, and know nothing, becauſe our dayes upon Earth* Job 8. 9.

are but a Shadow. And the ſhortneſſe of our Tranſitory lives, not permitting us to Continue long enough *Spectators* here, to ſee above a *Scene* or two at moſt of that great Play, Acted by Mankind upon the Stage of the World; 'tis no wonder, we are apt to harbour ſiniſter Thoughts of the Contriver of a Plot, whoſe neither Beginning nor End we are acquainted with. Which yet is little leſſe Injurious, than 'twere to Cenſure the lofty Tragœdian *Seneca*, or ſome other matchleſſe Artiſt, having peruſed but a Piece of ſome Tragœdy, whereof the Later part never arrived at our view. But, when once God's whole Plot (if I may ſo ſpeak) and conduct in the Adminiſtration of the World, ſhall come to be Diſcloſ'd; all thoſe Revolutions and Occurrences of Empires, States, Families, and Particular Perſons, which Men are here ſo prone to Quarrel with, will there appear ſo Juſt, ſo Requiſite, and ſo Seaſonable, that thoſe very things, which Here tempted us to Deny God, ſhall There engage us to Praiſe him; and we ſhall not ſo properly be Satisfy'd with his Providence, as Raviſh'd. But eſpecially, we ſhall be Tranſported with Wonder and Gratitude, when God ſhall vouchſafe to diſcover to his particular *Servants*, the Reaſons of his Diſpenſations towards them, and make out to them not only the Neceſſity and Juſtice, but

ev'n

ev'n Mercifulneſſe of thoſe very-Afflictions, that were moſt imputed to his *Severity*, (no *Stroke* from God's Paternal Hand, either lightning *Sooner*, or falling Heavier, or ſtaying Longer, than the Occaſion, that Extorted it, exacted) and convince them, that their Hopes were never Diſappointed, but to *Secure* their Title to Better things than thoſe they hoped for; nor their Interiour Intereſts prejudic'd, but for the Advantage of their *Supreme* ones. Yes, all that unwelcome Darkneſſe, that here ſurrounded our purblind Underſtandings, will vaniſh at the dawning of that Bright, and (as *St. Peter*'s *Expreſſion may be interpreted) Eternal day; wherein, the Reſolution of all thoſe Difficulties, which here Exerciſ'd (and perhaps Diſtreſſ'd) our Faith, ſhall be granted us to Reward it. And I muſt profeſſe to you, *Lindamor*, (as Unfaſhionable as ſuch a Profeſſion may ſeem in a Gentleman not yet Two and Twenty) that I find the ſtudy of thoſe excellent Themes, God's Word, and his Providence, ſo Difficult, and yet ſo Pleaſing and Inviting, that could Heaven afford me no greater Bleſſing than a clear Accompt of the abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, I ſhould value the having my Underſtanding Gratifi'd and Enrich'd with Truths of ſo Noble and precious a Nature, enough to Court Heaven at the rate of renouncing

2 Pet. 3. 18. * ἡμέρα αἰῶνος.

nouncing for it all thoſe unmanly Senſualities, and trifling Vanities, for which, inconſiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the Intereſt their Saviour ſo dearly bought them in it.

Sect. 25. Nor ſhall we onely Converſe with *Saints* and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them, what they are, without at all impoveriſhing himſelf. In Heaven, we ſhall enjoy (its Maker) God, and *ſee Him as he is*, who (as the Scripture teleth us) ſhall then be *all in all:* Compriſing all the Goods, we value in the Creatures, as Eminently and Fully, as the *Sun* doth the Light that Twinkleth in the *Stars*.

1 Joh. 3. 2. 1 Cor. 15. 28.

Anaxagoras. If one, that was none of the leaſt of the Philoſophers, ſcrupl'd not to tell the Man that ask'd him, What he was born for, that, It was to contemplate the Sun; If our beſt Naturaliſts themſelves, though the Darkneſs that is here caſt upon Things, and the Dimneſs of our Intellectual Eyes, (which I remember *Ariſtotle* fitly compares to thoſe of an Owl at Noon-day) permit us to diſcern but very little of that Wiſdom, Power, and Goodneſs, which he has expreſs'd in the Creation; are yet often tranſported and raviſh'd with a juſt Admiration of the Perfections He has diſplayed in his Workmanſhip. If the wiſe Queen that came ſo far to viſit *Solomon*, was put almoſt into an Extaſie,

Extaſie, by the ſight of his (though Wiſe, yet Humane) Ordering of things; And if the *Angels themſelves* (as St. *Peter* informs us) *deſire to look into the myſterious contrivances of God*, in order to Man's Redemption: How great a Satisfaction, *Lindamor*, may we juſtly conceive it muſt needs be, to be admitted to See ſo much of God, as Heaven will Diſcover to us? Eſpecially, ſince ſo much of our future Happineſs will conſiſt in that Beatick Viſion, (as the School-men juſtly call it) that St. *John* concluded, that *we ſhall be like God*, becauſe we *ſhall ſee Him as He is*. And our Saviour himſelf paraphraſes our Cœleſtial felicity by this bleſſed Viſion, where he ſays, *Bleſſed are the pure in heart, for they ſhall ſee God*: As on the other ſide, the Writer to the *Hebrews* employs the being Deni'd the ſight of that divine Object, as a Deſcription of extream Wretchedneſs, in that Text, where, having exhorted thoſe to whom he writes, to *follow peace and holineſs*; he adds, as the formidableſt Menace which he could make uſe of, to Deter them from ſlighting his Exhortation, *Without which, no Man ſhal ſee the Lord.* And by this Viſion our Saviour ſeems to deſcribe the happineſs even of Angels; where, forbidding the Scandalizing of any of thoſe little ones that believe in him, he adds to enforce what he had ſaid, that

1 Pet. 1. 12.

1 Joh. 3. 2.

Mat. 5. 8.

Heb. 12. 14.

Mat. 18. 10. that *their Angels do always ſee the face of his Father in Heaven.* We ſhall be ſo taken up with the Contemplation and Fruition of that Glorious Object, (in whoſe Infinity all goods are Included and *Dilated*) that Ages, numberleſs as the Joys That Beatifick Viſion abounds with, will ſcarce afford us leiſure for a *Diverſion* to any other Pleaſures, than thoſe it ſelf creates. Which are ſo Numerous, and ſo Entire, that we ſhall there Deſire nothing that we Have not, except more Tongues to ſing more Praiſes to him, or at leaſt a Capacity to pay him greater Thanks for what we Have. And even thoſe Deſires, God's gracious Acceptation will make, in being Conceiv'd, Accompliſh'd: for, otherwiſe Heaven's Reſidents ſcarce know any other Want, than that of Need to Wiſh; The Compleat Bleſſedneſſe of their Condition, reducing them to a happy Uſeleſneſſe of Wiſhes, by affording them a full Præ-poſſeſſion of all the Objects of *Deſire.* There Time, like Fire, having deſtroy'd What ever it could prey on, ſhall at laſt Dye it ſelf, and ſhall Go Out into Eternity. Whoſe Nature is ſuch, that though our Joys, after ſome Centuries of Yeares, may ſeem to have grown Elder, by having been enjoyed ſo many Ages, yet will they really ſtill continue New, not onely upon the ſcores of their Welcom-

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neſs and Freſhneſs, but by their perpetually Equal (becauſe Infinite) Diſtance from a Period. There, our Felicity ſhall always be the Same, yet ever New. Wearineſs arguing Imperfection, either in the Object, or the Appetite; the Former of which is Impoſſible in God, and the Later ſhall ceaſe in Heaven. Where our Felicity ſhal be ſo great, that Variety, (it ſelf) ſhall not be needed as a Part of it. And, if Heaven do admit Variety, it may be ſuppoſed ſuch a one, as ſhall conſiſt in a Further Knowledg of the Firſt Object (God,) not a Forſaking of it; and ſuch as ariſes from the fix'd Beholding of the changing-necks of Doves, or ſuch as we may ſee in the diverſified Refractions of the ſame ſparkling Diamond. In God, there is (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſuch a various Identity, that the Fruition of him both Satisfies and Creates Deſires: though That without Satiety; and This, without Diſquiet. Other Delights, like the uſual Cloaths we wear, quickly grow Stale, and are ſoon worn out; whereas Cœleſtial Pleaſures participate the Prerogative of the Jews Garments in the Wilderneſs, of not Impairing by being uſed Long. But as the amorous Needle, once joyn'd unto the Load-ſtone, would never, uncompell'd, forſake the inchanting Mineral; but, after Ages, cling no leſs cloſely to it than at the firſt Moment of their Union: Deut. 29. 5.

So

So do the Saints in Heaven, with the ſame Undiminiſh'd freſhneſſe, ever poſſeſſe their Joys, as if each moment were the Firſt that they poſſeſs'd them in. And, if their Happineſſe do not improve by laſtinger Enjoyment, 'tis perhaps, but becauſe it was at firſt uncapable of Increaſe. Or, if our Pleaſures do admit Acceſſion, they ſhall receive it from our Aſſurance, that we ſhall taſte them for Ever, and perpetually repeat (or rather continue) the ſame renew'd Fruitions To an Eternity, endear'd by nothing more, than by the quiet Leiſure it will afford us, undiſtractedly to Employ it, in Celebrating of the Author's Praiſes; and in a Condition, happier in that by it we grow paſt Doing, than paſt Suffering, Ill. In Heaven, (in a word) our inexhauſted Joys will be ſo Numberleſſe, and ſo Immenſe, that we ſhall Need (as well as Have) Eternity it ſelf to taſte them fully.

Sect. 26 But, *Lindamor*, it was not my Deſign to give you a particular Topography of this Cœleſtial *Canaan*; but only in a few words to let you ſee, that *'tis a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. And though I acknowledge, I have given you but dark Deſcriptions (and ſometimes rather Poetical than Chorographical) of what the Apoſtle

Apoſtle ſtyles, *The Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: yet ſince, to whet our Longings, for Fruitive (or Experimental) Knowledge, it is reſerv'd among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we ſhall be, when There: And ſince, what the Scripture hath reveal'd of Paradiſe, ſeems meant rather to Quicken our Obedience, than Satisfie our Curioſity; I may for thoſe purpoſes, have perhaps tolerably peform'd that task (of Heavenly Topography) by the Acknowledgments of my Diſability to do it Worthily. I ſhall now onely add this Property of our expected Bliſs, that the vaſt Multitude of Partners does detract nothing from each private Share, nor does the Publickneſſe Of it leſſen Propriety In it. This Ocean of Felicity being ſo Shoarleſſe, and ſo Bottomleſſe, that all the Saints and Angels cannot exhauſt it, it being as impoſſible for any Aggregate of Finites, to comprehend or exhauſt one Infinite, as 'tis for the greateſt number of Mathematick Points to amount to, or conſtitute, a Body. Our Neighbour-Regions do all Enjoy the benefit of Light as well as We; yet we enjoy not Leſſe, than if they enjoy'd None. Indeed, there is this difference between the Sun of Righteouſneſſe, and that of Heaven; Col. 1. 12

Heaven; that, whereas the Later, by his preſence, Eclipſes all the Planets, (his Attendants;) the Former, though radiant with a much mightier Splendor, will, by his Preſence, Impart it to his Saints: according to that of the Apoſtle; *When Chriſt, who is our Life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in Glory.* So that the Elect, in relation to this Sun, ſhall not be like Stars, which his ſhining Obſcures and makes to diſappear; but like poliſh'd Silver, or well-glaz'd Arms, or thoſe vaſter Balls of burniſh'd Braſſe, the tops of Churches are ſometimes adorn'd with, which ſhine not till they be ſhin'd upon, and derive their glittering Brightneſſe, and all the dazling Fire that environs and illuſtrates them, from their being expoſ'd (unskreen'd) to the Sun's refulgent Beams, *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine,* ſays every Saint (with the Spouſe in the *Canticles*) to his Redeemer. *David* ſays of them that put their truſt in God, *That he ſhall abundantly ſatisfie them with the fatneſſe of his Houſe, and make them drink of the River of his Pleaſures*: As if he meant to inſinuate, that, As when a multitude of Perſons drink of the ſame River, none of them is able to Exhauſt it, and yet each of them may have the full liber-

Col. 3. 4.

Cant. 6. 3

Pſa. 38. 6

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ty of Drinking as much as he Can, or as much as he Could, though none but Himſelf ſhould be Allow'd to Drink of it: So, whoſoever enjoys God, enjoys him Wholly, or at leaſt doth enjoy him ſo Entirely, in Relation to that Man's Capacity, that the Fruition of whatſoever reſts unenjoy'd of God, is forbidden by the Immenſity of the Object, and not the Præ-poſſeſſion of his Rivals. The Angels, though of a Nature Differing from ours, and thereby plac'd above the perſonal Experience of our ſufferings, and Infirmities, do yet ſo ſympathize with us, that (as our Saviour informs us) they rejoyce at the repentance of a ſinner. Luk.15.7 And, though the Members of the Church-Militant, and thoſe of the Triumphant, live as far aſunder, as Heaven is from Earth, and are not more Diſtant as to Place, than Differing as to Condition; yet St. *Paul* reckons all the Saints to be but *one Family in Heaven and Earth.* Eph.3.15 If then the diſparity of Reſidences, of Qualities, and of Conditions, cannot Now hinder the Lovers of God from being ſo concern'd in one another; how much of endearing Kindneſſe may we ſuppoſe, that they will Enterchange, When both their Love ſhall be Perfected, and all thoſe other Graces too that are pro-

per to Cheriſh and Encreaſe it. For, the ſame Apoſtle, who, to aſſiſt us, to conceive the Strictneſſe of the Union both betwixt Chriſt and his Saints, and the Saints among themſelves, tells us, that
1 Cor. 12. *He is the Head*, and *they are his Body, and Members in particular*; teaches us to make this Inference, That (to expreſſe his
verſ. 27, 28. Doctrine in his own Words) *If one Member ſuffer, all the Members ſuffer with it; and if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoyce with it.* Yes, *Lindamor*, in that bleſſ'd Condition, our Wills being perfectly conform'd unto our Maker's, no Saint nor Angel can enjoy his Love without poſſeſſing a proportionate Degree of Ours. And then, ſince perfect Friendſhip appropriates to each Friend the Croſſes and Proſperities of the other, (as good
2 Sam. 19. 37. *Barzillai* could not be highlier obliged by *David*, than by the King's kindneſſe to his Son) each ſeveral Beatitude in Heaven ſhall (in ſome ſort concern the whole Society, and) be Ours. As Aſtronomers teach us, that the Earth receives Addition of Light by the Sun's Beams beſtow'd upon the Stars, and from the Moon reflecting upon Her. And becauſe our Perſonal Capacities are too too Narrow, to contain All that Joy, we are (by the ſtrange Arith-

Arithmetick of Friendſhip) in a manner multipli'd into as many Happy Perſons, as there are Saints and Angels bleſs'd in Heaven. Our perfect Union to our Common Head, and mutual Communion with Each other, applying and bringing home every Felicity of Theirs to Us. This Friendly and Reciprocal Sympathy, reaching us each Glorifi'd Saints Bleſſedneſs, and Him ours, by a bleſs'd Circulation, which makes us Encreaſe, by our Reſenting them, thoſe Joys (of others) whoſe Encreaſe we Reſent. But by Thoughts are engaged in ſo good Company, *Lindamor*, that they keep me from conſidering, how faſt the Hours paſs, and have almoſt made me forget, that the Time which my Occaſions allow'd me for Scribling to you, is ſo far ſpent, that not now at laſt to Reprieve you from the Proſecution of my blunt Pen, were to be almoſt as Injurious to my own Affairs, as to your Patience. Hereafter yet, I may poſſibly make you ſome amends for this, with Riper Diſcourſes of the Nature and Duties, or (if you will) the Properties and Returns of this Love, to which I have hitherto preſented you Some Motives. To (the laſt of) which I might add, That, our Love to the Creature is an Earneſt, but to God 'tis a Title; the

One makes Us the Objects, but the Other makes the Object Ours: That, since there is in Love so strange a Magick, as to Transform the Lover into the Object Lov'd; we ought to be extremely careful of the Dedication of a Passion, which, as it is plac'd, must either *Dignifie* our Nature, or *Degrade* it: And not to Addresse to any Lower (or, which is all one, to any Other) Object, the Highest Intensity of a Love, which cannot Stoop without our Degradation. And these I might expatiate on, and Recruit them with many other Motives, additional to those I have already insisted on; but that I may more properly reserve them to the Treatise of the Properties of that Love, whose Nature so partakes That of its Object, that there can hardly be produc'd more powerful Motives to it than the Conditions of it. Since then (as I freshly intimated) I cannot but fear that your tir'd Patience, as well as my urgent Occasions (though these will recall me to morrow Morning to my own *Western* Hermitage) doth at present summon me to leave you; and since I cannot do so in a happier place than Heaven, I shall suspend my Farewells, onely to beg you to believe, that so Noble a Motive of Exalting Friendship, as the Ambition of rendring Mine a

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fit Return for Yours, hath ſo improv'd my Kindneſſe, that my Affection, without wronging its Greatneſſe, could not Expreſſe it ſelf by any Leſſe Attempt, than this of gaining you the Greateſt, and the moſt Deſirable of all Goods, by elevating (that Noble Harbinger of your Soul) your Love, to Heaven: Whoſe Joys alone are not Inferiour to thoſe which the Being made Inſtrumental to procure them you, would really Create in,

My deareſt Lindamor,

Your moſt Faithful, moſt Affectionate, and moſt Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

From *Leeſe* this 6th of *Aug.* 1648.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHilſt this fourth Edition of the fore-going Treatiſe was upon finiſhing, it hapned, that a Devout and very Ingenious Friend of the Authors, having preſs'd to have the Peruſal of ſome Occaſional Meditations *that lay by him, on ſeveral Subjects, met, among others, with that which follows; And finding the Subject to be of Affinity with what is rather Touch'd than Inſiſted on, in the 61. page of the paſt Treatiſe,* Touching Men's Inability to Praiſe God Worthily, *and having a great deal of Partiality for the Reflection, would needs have it annex'd as it was, to the newly finiſh'd Edition: Notwithſtanding the Author's having too juſt cauſe to urge, That, beſides the Imperfections that are made neceſſary by the Sublimity of the Theme, ſuch Occaſional Papers, eſpecially His, are wont to have peculiar Unaccurateneſſes, as being deſign'd rather to entertain the Writer himſelf, than any other Reader.*

An

An Occaſional Reflection upon a

LETTER,

(Receiv'd in *April*, 1662.)

Containing an Account of what paſſed on the KING'S *Coronation-day, in a little Country Town.*

Need not, *Pyrocles*, after what we have been reading, tell you, that the Writer of this Letter thinks, that both in what he has ſaid of the King, and in what he has done to Solemnize His Coronation, he has behav'd himſelf rarely well. For I doubt not, but you eaſily diſcern by his way of Writing, that he is highly ſatisfied with his Performances, and expects that he ſhall, if not be Thanked by the King, at leaſt be Mention'd in the News-book. But 'twill, I fear, be requiſite to tell you, that this honeſt Man is not alone of his mind; for being his Landlord's Bailiff, he is eſteem'd at that rate by his Neighbours, and look'd upon as a Man very conſiderable in his Pariſh; and is perhaps thought to have a right to Pity moſt of thoſe that do not Ad-

mire what he has now been doing. And yet, You and I, who pretend not to be Courtiers, can, in his Rural *Encomiums*, and in his ill-contrived way of Honouring his Prince, eaſily diſcover ſo much that might have been Mended, and ſo much that may be Laugh'd at, that, if the King, according to His wonted Graciouſneſs, vouchſafe this Action his Smiles, it muſt not be in conſideration of the ſuitableneſs of the Performances to the Occaſion, but, *partly* as they proceed from a Hearty, though ill-expreſſ'd, Loyalty and Love, and *partly*, as they afford Him a Subject of Merriment. And not onely the nice Criticks, who have ſeen thoſe Magnificent Solemnities, and heard the Eloquent Panegyricks, wherewith the principal Cities and Aſſemblies in the Nation have thought they did but Part of what they ſhould; and not onely thoſe Aſſiduous Courtiers, who, by the Honour of a nearer Acceſs have Opportunities (deni'd to others) of diſcovering thoſe Particularities that may beſt give a high Veneration for a Great Perſon and a Great Prince, to thoſe that are qualifi'd to diſcern and reliſh ſuch things; not only theſe, I ſay, will have a quite other Opinion of the Rural Praiſes, and Antique Ceremonies that were ſo well lik'd a hundred Miles from *London*; but this Country-man himſelf, if he were admitted to the Court, and bred a while

while there, would in time see so great a distance betwixt what he Has done, and what a Person better bred Might have done, that he could not remember without Blushes, what he now looks upon with Triumph.

And now I must on this occasion confess to you, *Pyrocles*, that I have (on other Rises) several times been revolving in my thoghts, what the Angels think of those Praises and Descriptions of God that Men devise, (For I intend not here to speak of those the Scripture suggests) and wherein we are most Applauded by others, and do oftentimes perchance Applaud our selves. For those Cœlestial Courtiers (if I may so call them) have several Advantages to assist them in the Celebration of our common Master, which we poor Mortals want. For, First, They are free from those Selfish and Inordinate Affections, that too often hinder us, either from Discerning the Excellency of divers of God's Attributes and Ways, or from duly Acknowleding it. They have no Sins to keep them from descrying the Justness of what he does; They have no Ingratitude to oppose the fuller Resentments of His Goodnesse; and they are not tempted, not to discern and Adore His Wisdom, for fear they should appear Culpable for repining at His Dispensations. And indeed, their Longævity allowing them the full Prospect from

from end to end, of thoſe intricate tranſactions of Providence, of which, ſhort-liv'd Mortals do commonly ſee but a part; they are queſtionleſs far more ſatisfi'd with the incomparably better Contrivances they diſcern in the Management of human Affairs, than we are with the Conduct or Plots of the moſt skilfully written Plays and Romances. Beſides, thoſe happy Spirits, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *They ſtand before God*, and that they *continually ſee His face*, have by that Privilege, the bleſſ'd Opportunities of diſcovering in the Deity they Contemplate and ſerve, many Excellencies, which even They could never but by Experience have form'd any thoughts of; and they ſee in one anothers Solemn Adorations and Praiſes, a way of Honouring the Object of them, ſo much tranſcending the utmoſt of what We here aim at, that their Homages to their Creator may well be ſuppoſ'd of a far Nobler Kind than ours. And laſtly, When I conſider, how much leſs unworthy thoughts and expreſſions touching things Divine the ſame Perſon may have, when come to his full Maturity of Age and Parts, and whilſt he was but a Child in both; and when I conſider, how much more Advantagious Conceptions of the Wiſdom diſplayed in the Univerſe, & particularly in the Contrivance of a Human Body, one that is a true Philoſopher,

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ſopher, and a skilful Anatomiſt, may have, in compariſon of a Man illiterate, and unacquainted with Diſſections: When, I ſay, I conſider theſe things, and compare the dim Twi-light of Human Intellects in this Life, with that Clear and Radiant Light, which the Scripture aſcribes to Angels, I cannot but think, that, having to the Privilege of a much nearer Acceſs than is allow'd Us to contemplate God's Perfections, the Advantage of having incomparably more Illuminated Intellects to apprehend them with, they muſt frame otherguess Conceptions of the Divine Attributes, and glorifie the Poſſeſſor at an otherguess Rate, than is allowed to Thoſe, whoſe Underſtandings are ſo dim, and whoſe Reſidence is ſo remote from that bleſs'd Place, where the Perfections they would Extol are moſt moſt Diſplay'd.

Aſſiſted by theſe and the like Advantages, *Pyrocles*, thoſe happy Spirits may well frame Notions, and employ Expreſſions in honour of their Maker, ſo far tranſcending Ours, that though the Angel's Goodneſs keeps them, doubtleſs, from beholding them with Contempt; yet, we may wel think, they look upon them with ſuch a kind of Pity, as that, wherewith great Wits and Courtiers look upon the Miſtakes and Imperfections of what they Did and Writ, when they were but School-boys; and as that, wherewith, when

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we ſhall be admitted to the Society of the Angels, we ſhall look back upon our former ſelves. No, *Pyrocles*, to Praiſe God is a Debt, which though we ſhould ever be Paying, we muſt always Owe, not only becauſe the renewed Obligations will laſt as long as we; but becauſe, though the entire Sum were *poſſible* to be paid, *we* have no Coyn of the Value that would be requiſite to make a Payment of that nature. 'Tis true indeed, that ſome Men ſay much more than others upon a Subject, on which none can ſay E-
Heb. 10 nough, and which, even *the Spirits of juſt Men made perfect* can but imperfectly celebrate. It may be too, that the Praiſes we pay to God procure Us ſome from Men, and perhaps even from Orators and Encomiaſts; and though I hope no Man can ſo far flatter himſelf, as to think he can Flatter what he can never do Right to; yet, the Zealouſneſs of our Endeavours, and the Applauſe that others entertain them with, may perhaps tempt us to think, that, becauſe in our Expreſſions we have Surpaſs'd our Selves, we have almoſt Equall'd our Theme: as if to make our Praiſes too great for any other Subject, were ſufficient to make them great enough for God. But alas, how widely muſt we be miſtaken! ſince our Expreſſions, if we ſpeak ſence, can at beſt but fully repreſent our Conceptions, and

thoſe being but the Notions of a Finite Creature, muſt needs fall extremely ſhort of Perfections, which were not what they are, if they were not Infinite. No, *when* we have employ'd the loftieſt Hyperboles, and exhauſted all the celebrating Topicks and Figures of Rhetorick; *when* we have dreſs'd Metaphyſical Abſtractions in Poetick Raptures; *when* we have ranſack'd what ever things are moſt Excellent among the Creatnres, and having Defæcated them, and Pil'd them up together, have made that Heap but a Riſe to take our ſoaring flight from; *when* we have ſumm'd up, and left Beneath our Expreſſions, all that we are here wont to acknowledge Above them; nay, *when* Inſtructed, as well as Inflam'd, and Tranſported by that *Inacceſſible Light*, that is *Inhabited* by what we Adore, we ſeem Rais'd and Elevated above all that is Mortal, and above our ſelves, and ſay things, that nothing elſe could either Inſpire or Merit; even *then*, I ſay, thoſe Expreſſions, which any otherwiſe appli'd would be but Hyperboles, do but expreſs our Devotion, not the Divine Object of it, and declare How much we honour Him, rather than what He is. And indeed, none but the Poſſeſſor of an Infinite Intellect can be able to ſay, what the Poſſeſſor of other Infinite Perfections deſerves to have ſaid of Him. And what ever zealous skill

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we praiſe God with, we do far leſs Honour Him than Injure Him, if we think our aſpiringeſt Praiſes can arrive ſo far, as, I ſay not to *Reach*, but ſo much as to *Approach* their Subject.

But let not this inevitable Impotence (*Pyrocles*) Trouble, or Diſcourage Us. Rev. 14. 4 Thoſe bleſſed Souls, that *follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes*, do (as we are taught in the *Apocalypſe*) make it their Buſineſſe and find it their Happineſs, to ſpend a great part of their Eternity in Extolling Him, by whom they are plac'd in a Condition, where they can have no Employment, but what is Holy and Noble. And even here below, the Praiſing of God is a work, wherein we Imitate, though we do not Equal, the Angels, and are buſied in the ſame Employment, though not with the ſame Skill. Nay, Heaven it ſelf exempts not its Reſidents from an Impotence which belongs to Creatures, not as they are Imperfect ones, but as they are Creatures. Even the Members of the Church Triumphant do not Triumph over this neceſſary Impotence; their Praiſes may need Pardon, even in a place where they can Sin no more: And they can expect but from God's Goodneſs, the Acceptance of thoſe Praiſes, that are Improv'd, as well as Occaſion'd, even by their being made Partakers of his Glory. Nay, even in the Prophet

phet *Iſaiah's Exſtatick Viſion*, the Seraphims themſelves, that are introduced, as anſwering one another's glad Acclamations to God, are likewiſe repreſented, as covering (out of reſpect) their Faces with their Wings. But, *Pyrocles*, as I was ſaying, this unavoidable Diſability, to ſay things Worthy of God, need not at all trouble us; *ſince* we pay our Homages to one, whoſe Goodneſſe our Expreſſions can as little equal, as they can his other Attributes. He that Created us, will not Impute it to us, that we act but as Creatures; And *ſince* he has declar'd, that *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not*; The Impotence I have been ſpeaking of, ought to bring us rather Joy than Trouble, ſince the infinite Diſtance betwixt us, without leſſening his favourable Acceptance of our Praiſes, ſuppoſes the boundleſs Perfections of Him, whom thoſe Praiſes (through his Goodneſs) help to give us an Intereſt in; And no Son would repine at His Royal Father's Greatneſs, how Immenſe ſoever, being ſure, that Greatneſs would not leſſen his Kindneſs. For 'tis leſs Deſirable to be able to deſcribe the Power and Excellencies of him we have an Intereſt in, than to have an Intereſt in one, whoſe Power and Goodneſs exceeds what ever we can Say or Fancy of them. To

Eſa. 6. 2

2 Cor. 8. 12.

To conclude, *Pyrocles*, *since* on the one side God is most truly said in the Scripture to be so *Glorious*, *that he is Exalted above all Blessing and Praise*, and consequently, though *I could* (to use St. *Paul*'s phrase) *speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*, yet the highest things I could say of the Divine Perfections, must needs be therefore far Below them, because a Creature were able to say them. And, since on the other side, it is of Us Men, that God vouchsafes to say, *Who so offereth Praise, glorifieth Me*; and his transcendent Excellency is so far from being inconsistent with a resembling Graciousness, that such a Benignity is one of the most conspicuous parts of it; I will not forbear to pay my Praises unto one, whose Deserving infinitely more than I can offer, keeps him not from Accepting as much less than he deserves. But then I must not Presume to *fill my mouth with his Praises*, without Sensibly acknowledging, that there is not any Subject, whereon my Expressions can more want Eloquence, than on this Subject; even Eloquence it self would want Expressions.

Nehem. 9 5.

1 Cor. 13 1.

Ps. 50.23

FINIS.